

Anne Bostwick

Burgie - L-3-7

THE
HERMIT
OF THE
ROCK.

A NOVEL.

VOL. I.







HERMIT OF THE ROCK.

THE
HERMIT
OF THE
ROCK.

A NOVEL.

A New Edition, being the Fourth.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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in calf and lettered.]



TO THE HONOURABLE

LADY PRISCILLA BERTIE.*

MADAM,

IN addressing to your Ladyship a
moral sentimental Novel, I se-
cure it a kind reception from the
world.

* This lady, the present Baroness D'Eresby,
upon the demise of the late Duke of Ancaster

VOL. I.

A

her

This, however, Madam, is not my motive for inscribing it to you — it is not the mere selfish hope of this piece meeting with favour from the sanction of your name, that induces me to use it on this occasion. No—I have a far superior reason.—I admire your virtues —I am charmed with your good sense —I see no young woman of fashion more estimable, than the Dutchess of Ancaſter's daughter. She is not only the greateſt beauty of our court — but,

her brother, without iſſue, ſucceeded in the Barony, whoſe huſband, Sir Peter Burrel, Knight, in her right, officiates as Lord Great Chamberlain of England.

like

like her mother, she is famed for the amiableness of her conduct.

I ambition that this work should be honoured by a dedication of it to her, and I flatter myself she will not disdain to become its Patroness.

In a convent in Paris where I was educated—a friend of mine was determined to try her talent in this species of writing—never intending that it should be made public.—When it was finished, she presented the Manuscript to me — and I find myself now, by the most unfortunate of events, at liberty to publish it without giving offence to the amiable and beloved writer of it.

In the course of the history, a few
quo-

quotations were introduced by its writer from some *French* poets; but as they must have lost much of their beauty by a translation, I thought it best to substitute in their room such as were equally applicable from *English* poets: a choice, I hope, your Ladyship's judgment will not condemn.

However this work may have suffered in the translation *, there is a moral in it which may yet be found.

* Thus it passed in the former Editions, as a Translation from the French; but now it is generally believed to be an Original. Though the Authorefs, the better to disguise it, has inserted the Names and Titles of the French Nation.

unhurt.

DEDICATION. ix

unhurt — and which is all, perhaps,
that can entitle it to your Ladyship's
favour. Such as it is — I lay it at
your feet, and beg leave to subscribe
myself

Your Ladyship's most obedient

And very sincere admirer,

THE EDITOR.

Names of the Persons

M E N.

Duke de Clarence

Duke de Maurice

Duke de Henrie

Marquis de Lausanne

Marquis de Palmene

Marquis de Villars

Comte de Solignac

Comte de Luzy

Comte de Parte

Lindor, Comte de Savillon

Comte de Artois

Chevalier de Mondonoir

Chevalier de Elbeu

Chevalier de Montville

Meilcour, Lover of Adelaide.



in the Hermit of the Rock.

W O M E N.

Dutcheſs de Clarence.

Viſtoria de Clarence, or }
Viſtoria de Lauſanne. }

Comteſſe de Vignolles

Comteſſe de Villeneauf

Maria de Villeneauf, or }
Maria de Savillon. }

Julia de Sanſcerre, or }
Julia de Solignac. }

Madame La Bert

Madame de St. Clare

Madame Le Blanc

Mademoiſelle de Murci

Adelaide de Narbonne

Nannette, a Chamber-maid.

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BREECHES ;
OR, THE
Country Curate and Cobler's Wife.
A TALE.

With a Prefatory Apology for its present
Publication.

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T H E
H E R M I T
O F T H E
R O C K.

VICTORIA DE CLARENCE,

T O

MARIA DE VILLENEAUF.

IT is done, my Maria—my word is
irrevocably given—I have yielded
to the commands of my father—to the
too eloquent tears of my mother—and,
on this day week, I am to be made the
wretched wife of the Marquis de Lau-
fanne.

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B

Oh

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Oh Luzy! — most amiable — most charming Luzy! Heaven can witness with what sentiments of truth and love I consent to give you up for ever! — You will think I have wronged you — you will complain, with seeming justice on your side; yet Victoria denies the accusation — her heart declares for *you*, my Luzy — but her duty undoes us both.

My God! would he not pity me, could he behold me a trembling victim, led an offering to the altar of avarice? — Could he be a spectator of those tears — those agonies that must accompany me on the day which yields me to the arms of Lausanne — ah, my Maria! — Luzy would no longer reproach me as
the



the author of his wretchedness ; he would let fall some drops of pity, and lament with me the austerity of fate.

You will chide me, Maria, when you read those impassioned lines—you will remind me of the rights that the Marquis will claim over me—you will tell me that I have assented to become his wife—and that Luzy must be thought of no more.

Alas ! you are right ! — it will be a crime to think — to speak of him, when once I have given my hand to another. But, ah ! allow me time to tear him from my idea — suffer me, my friend, to mention him before the fatal hour arrives, that is, to place between us that cruel barrier, which

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will separate us for ever. Deny me not the consolation of repeating his lov'd name, while yet I can do it with innocence. — Be not too rigorous — I still prize my virtue beyond my love.

You remember when first I saw Luzy — You remember also the emotions which at that instant took possession of my bosom — I knew not at the time what they meant — I had never experienced them before — and ah, my Maria! I have never felt them since: — how can I describe them? — they were too violent to be delightful — they were too exquisite to be imagined.

Surprize — confusion — joy — those were the most defineable sensations — the rest must remain untold — my pen cannot

THE HERMIT OF THE ROCK.

cannot do justice to them. Love for the first time presented itself before me — it rushed at once into my bosom : its approaches were violent, but it soon wore a milder and more pleasing aspect.

This charming appearance captivated my reason, and bidding adieu to those tumults which had at the beginning affected me, I loved with pleasure, with gaiety, with composure. He looked at me — he viewed me with attention — my fearful eye sunk under his piercing mein, and blushes overspread my face.

It was on a feast which my father annually gives his tenants, and which the young villagers call their rural
B 3 ball.

ball. — Ah, I can never forget it! It was then I saw him — he was on a visit to Madame Du Parte — he came with her to join with us the happy throng. We were all habited like nymphs of Arcadia, and our dresses, my Maria, were emblems of our simplicity.

He approached me—he asked me to dance — I consented willingly — his manner was the tenderest — the most flattering—his eyes spoke a language I did not then understand — but which even at that time was delightful; and from that night Luzy became an object of my regard — shall I say too much if I own, of my most ardent *affection*?

The character of the Comte was
that

that of an amiable sensible man — his spirit was generous ; his soul was as noble as his birth ; and his heart was extolled for its excellence.

Luzy was introduced to my father by Madame Du Parte, as a young nobleman in whom the graces and virtues combined—as an object who had created not only the admiration, but the esteem of courts ; and my father ever found him a sincere friend and most agreeable companion.

I need not repeat more, my Maria, — you know Luzy — you also know with what pains he undertook to make himself the conqueror of Victoria's heart — ah, were not those pains rewarded ! He sighed for me alone—he
 seemed

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seemed to regard me as the only being in the universe, who could give him happiness.

My father—my mother beheld and heard his passion for me ; and they encouraged him with every hope of success. The old Comte De Luzy resides in Italy, and the time drew near when his son's presence there would be necessary. At length the day was fixed for his leaving us — it came too soon—he was about to bid us farewell—ah, what anguish tore my fond bosom at the idea of parting with him ! He fell at my feet — he once more painted to me the sincerity — the fervency of his love.—I listened—I wept—I wrung my hands.

“ Ah !”

“ Ah !” cried he, “ My Victoria, why all this grief ? — why these contending tumults ? ”

“ It is past,” returned I, “ those hours of delight are past, my Luzy — and we shall behold them no more.”

My prophetic soul — yes, Maria, my prophetic soul whispered too truly the miseries I now feel. He bade me be of comfort — he swore to be faithful to me alone, and assured me his return should be as soon as possible.

On my part, I vowed to love no other — I vowed no other should ever possess my hand ; — we called down heaven as a witness of all we uttered. — That heaven now beholds me on the verge of breaking through those en-

B 5 gagements

gements which in its awful presence I had made.

Ah, my father!—ah, my mother! why all this tyranny? You saw my affection for Luzy—you encouraged it—and yet you have doomed me to self reproach—to misery—to Lau-fanne! whom I can never love!

How shall I impart the fatal tidings to Luzy!—Should I not justify myself to him?—Will he not hear it until he arrives in France?—My God, what will he think of me!—What will he not suppose!—Maria, my dear Maria—can there be a fate more wretched than mine?

Why was I not born the happy daughter of some artless, some unaf-
piring

piring villager! — then should I have married the man of my choice—then would the glare of superfluous wealth have been disregarded by my parents, and the honest worth of my shepherd have been the chief consideration.

But whither does my pen carry me? — Ah, duty! — to thee I sacrifice—to thee I yield up every gleam of happiness! — let me not therefore dare to murmur against those parents to whom I have been so much obliged—but rather reflect, that by rebelling against their commands, I should render myself unworthy of subscribing, that I am the friend of my Maria.

VICTORIA DE CLARENCE.

LETTER II.

VICTORIA DE CLARENCE,

TO

MARIA DE VILLENEAUF.

YOUR letter, my Maria, afforded me great comfort ; and the tears I shed upon it eased my afflicted heart. One thing in it I will own I thought severe.

When you tell me that “ *I must learn to command those feelings, which have hitherto rendered me too sensible of pleasure and misfortune ;*” you surely forget that I possess not your judgment—your firmness—your philosophy.

Ah

Ah, my friend! teach me to subdue this weak—this repining nature—point out to me those paths in which your virtues have led you; and lend me your supporting hand to conduct me through them.

Teach me to forget the amiable—the seducing Luzy—teach me to renounce those fond ideas which have hitherto formed the basis of my felicity—and, ah! teach me how to honour—how to love the Marquis De Laufanne!

Good God, my Maria!—I feel that the task is too difficult. To-morrow—oh, to-morrow!—my wretched destiny will be for ever sealed!—No repentance—no appeal can then save me—the irrevocable ceremony once
passed

passed — I am lost beyond redemption — Father ! — mother ! — to thy tenderness ! — — Alas, my Maria ! — the voice of nature pleads not for me — and Victoria is sacrificed without one sigh !

The Marquis is here — I am momentarily persecuted by him to indulge him in an hour's conversation alone. I evade it — I know not how to refuse a request which, if I loved him, I would with pleasure grant, — nor how to grant it — since I love him not. Spare your chiding, Maria — to you only do I complain.

He is here — he taps at my door — I must obey ! — *Must* ! — Is this the language for a man, whom to-morrow's sun will see me wedded to ? —

That

That thought — but he entreats — he pleads his impatience. — Once more do I resign my pen.

This man, my Maria, has endeavoured to dazzle my eyes with the splendor of ornaments, which I equally detest and despise. He presented me with his picture — and offered to tie it round my neck. I started at the proposal, and threw him from me with disdain.

The Marquis looked offended — he hemmed off a reproach — his cheeks glowed with resentment, which he strove to conceal, by kissing my hand. I flung myself into a chair — the tears fell plentifully from my eyes: — what a scene! My father came in — he darted
at

at me a look of anger. I arose — I trembled.

“ Perverse girl,” exclaimed he in a terrifying tone, “ suffer the Marquis to tie his portrait round your neck ; and wear it next your heart !

I tried to approach Lausanne—my knees shook under me—he saved me the trouble by flying towards me, and falling at my feet, “ Charming—cruel Victoria ! behold prostrate before you an ardent lover :—behold a man who will consecrate to your happiness his life—his person—fortune—every good he claims on earth—give me but your love—I ask no other recompence.”

“ My Lord,” cried I, in a voice almost stifled with grief, “ I have often
told

told you, I have no heart to give — my duty will carry me to the altar with you—and my virtue will prevent me from breaking those engagements I shall make you there. — But, oh! — would to heaven that some other woman, more deserving than myself, possessed those affections you lavish on me!—I am unworthy my Lord——”

“ Be gone to your apartment, girl !” cried my enraged father, “ is it thus you shew *your duty* ?”

I retired—and am here seated to lament—to complain of my miserable fate to the only friend I have left.

The hurry—the perturbation — the joy that fill every countenance—shock me beyond description. — I view myself

self as an innocent victim they are preparing to lead to the temple of some favourite deity, on a day devoted to festivity. — I am to be decked with every gaudy flower of nature to make my bondage appear the more conspicuous. — I am to be led in golden bands to ruin — and made magnificently wretched.

Ah, my Maria !—to-morrow—let to-morrow be marked down as the blackest day of fate !—it will be then, that Victoria shall resign Luzy—and give her hand to his proud—his happy rival !—it will be then, that, with the name of Clarence, she shall part with happiness for ever !— I am summoned to attend my mother.

It

It is now past one o'clock — yet sleep denies to visit my disconsolate couch—I will relate to you the occurrences that have happened since I was interrupted some hours ago. I must write to prevent my dwelling too minutely on the gloomy prospects which await your Victoria — the subject—no matter what — but that which concerns me nearly, will, I am sure, interest you more than any other, I shall begin then from my appearing in my mother's antichamber, according to the orders she was pleased to send me for that purpose.

On my entrance she kindly threw her arms around me, and enquired anxiously about my health—then with a smiling

smiling countenance asked, whether I had chosen the ornaments best suited to my complexion, from those that she had ordered to be sent from Paris?

I threw myself on my knees before her, — and begged her to inform me whether I could hope for no mitigation of my sentence — and whether I was to be married to the man I detested? “ Ah, Madam !” continued her unhappy child, “ What do those ornaments you speak of avail? — They can administer no cure for a wounded mind—they cannot bring peace to this wretched heart.

“ Pardon me, my dear mother—but my thoughts have been far differently employed ! I chose no flowers. — I
would

would not look at the finery my woman presented me with from Paris — they have no charms for me—I care not what cloaths I wear on the most miserable day of my life.”

My mother wept ; she spoke of the Marquis's birth — his riches — his magnificence :—she concluded by saying, that it was a match on which her fond heart was set, and which the interruption of would break into a thousand pieces.

The very idea of my occasioning her so much anguish shocked me to the soul ; — my blood seemed to congeal within my veins—I could answer nothing — but my tears expressed the horror of my mind.

My

My dear mother raised me from the ground ; and seating me by her, pressed me to her bosom. She talked much of the favour I should confer upon her and my father ; she assured me that I should be happier than my fearful heart presaged.

She allowed the Marquis to have some youthful follies, but was well assured that time, and my prudent conduct, would estrange him from them. My mother then painted the joy she should feel on seeing me give my hand to a man of so much worth and taste ; and the idea of rendering her satisfied, conquered every selfish sentiment.

“ It is done, Madam !” cried I, “ I yield up liberty—happiness—content,
since

since my doing so, can give you felicity : ah, my dear mother ! I am ready to present my hand to the Marquis — My life shall be devoted to your pleasure — but hasten, Madam, the marriage ceremony, and let me not reflect on what I have consented to.”

My mother looked delighted, and rang her bell ; she ordered an attendant to desire the Duke De Clarence and the Marquis De Laufanne to enter : they obeyed the summons, and on my mother's telling my father *that I was once again their child* ; he caught me in his arms, and poured forth a thousand thanks for my having done what duty required of me.

As for the Marquis — his raptures
are

are not to be described ; he said many gallant things, and endeavoured to convince me by his eyes, that his heart felt more than his tongue could utter. I strove to appear satisfied, — nay, pleased with these expressions — but, ah, my God ! — What were the pangs my soul endured at the time !

I perceived, my dear Maria, that my fate was determined — I therefore put a constraint upon those regrets which very often had nearly escaped me. I shall become the wife of Lausanne — that is inevitable : — my duty will soon oblige me to receive him with cheerfulness, and a look of pleasure.

That thought occurred to me frequently during the evening — I therefore

fore tried to appear complaisant to him from voluntary motives, before he should reflect that the marriage ceremony alone entitled him to such behaviour — what it cost me, I will not say — but I listened to his love — I received his presents — and I suffered him to tie around my neck his picture.

Oh, Luzy — Luzy ! — thy charming image ! — but I will be myself — I will be boldly wretched — I will allow him to suspect me of inconstancy — of having betrayed him to his rival — of having preferred an additional few thousands, to a competency with him. — Ah, he will renounce me for ever ! — he will abhor

my very idea — all this for duty !

I threw myself on my bed for a few moments—I endeavoured to compose my mind — it would not do — and I have again resumed my pen.

Tell me, Maria — of what nature Laufanne's heart must be formed, to receive the hand of a woman whose affections he knows have been long engaged to another ? — How can he condescend to be obliged to her duty, when he is convinced it is *that* alone that can influence her kindness towards him.

If I mistake not, Laufanne is imperious — indelicate — and his libertine principles are not the only bad ones I shall have to contend with.

Oh,

Oh, friend! — what a man have I lost! — how wretched is my destiny! but of that no more — I have promised to meet the hour from whence my misery will take its date — with calmness. Heaven grant, Maria, I may have fortitude sufficient to keep that promise!

My mind is exceedingly disturbed — I hear strange noises! — I thought the groans of a dying person founded under my window — the weakness of my spirits expose me to alarms. — I will say my prayers — I will beg of God to calm this tumult in his servant's bosom.

My Maria! — what — whom have I seen! — he is still before me — ah, it was but a dream! — why do I tremble thus?

yet I spoke to him—I am sure I spoke to him!—Good heavens why this terror!—Was it not Luzy I saw — and would Luzy hurt his Victoria? Ah, never?

Maria — I left thee to pray — I had no sooner finished my orisons, than an inclination to sleep came over my swollen eyes. — I indulged it — and for that purpose threw myself upon my bed. I fell asleep — but, oh, my God! what a form presented itself to my fancy! — I thought I beheld Luzy standing at my bedside, with a poniard in his hand: — he opened wide the curtains — he looked wistfully at me, and pointed towards heaven.

I called

I called to him in the agony of my soul — I strove to seize his robe — he avoided my grasp — he bade me to repent—*for I had ruined him.* “Your perfidy,” continued he, “has deprived me of happiness — and thus I avenge myself.”

He held the weapon over me as if about to strike — I screamed to him to spare his Victoria, and in pushing his hand violently from me — I plunged the poniard in his heart.

Ah, my God! — I saw him fall — I heard him groan! I leaped from my bed, and fell beside him — but he turned his dying eyes from me — and calling me the destroyer of his peace

and life — he fetched a deep sigh, and expired in torture.

What a cruel phantom ! — I am agitated beyond description — my knees knock together — my fingers refuse to guide my pen.

Ah, my friend, the horrid day appears that is to behold me the wife of Laufanne ! — it darts upon my paper — and the clouds are making way for the appearance of the sun. — That sun ! — ah, how soon will it see me, the wretched object of my own aversion ! How soon will it see me, dragged to those marriage rites, which I once hoped to solemnize only with Luzy ! — that is all over now ; — this day yields me up to the
Marquis

Marquis — and from this day, I must endeavour to banish even from my imagination the figure of Luzy. — Too cruel — too difficult task!

Why are you not with me? — Ah, why am I not allowed the consolation of pouring my griefs into thy sympathizing bosom? — I want a comforter — I require the presence of a friend to support me in the most calamitous moment of my life.

Maria, when you give your hand to Lindor, remember not the wedding day of Victoria. Marriages are happy where hearts are united — mine rebels against the master my parents have chosen for it, — and it is therefore — that this day will be a day of woe to

your friend. — I hear my mother's voice : — what, up so soon ? — I must attend her. Adieu—I fear I shall never subscribe myself again your

VICTORIA DE CLARENCE.

LETTER III.

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE,

TO

MARIA DE VILLENEAUF.

“ Nor Hymen, nor the Graces here preside,
 “ Nor Juno to befriend the blooming bride,
 “ But fiends with fun’ral bands the process led,
 “ And furies waited at the genial bed.”

NOW, my Maria, it is all over !
 yesterday I became the wife of
 Lausanne—and instead of feeling those
 soft, those tender emotions, which
 would

would have possessed me had I loved the Marquis — my bosom was a chaos of horror, confusion, and despair.

At ten o'clock in the morning I was dressed by the hands of my mother and my women for the appearance at chapel, where the ceremony of making me miserable was to be performed.

I did not shed one tear during the business of the toilette — but I was extremely ill — I could hardly stand — I could with infinite difficulty keep my head from falling on my bosom — I felt as if the whole world had abandoned me to destruction, and that my fond mother was the first to condemn her child to ruin.

They adorned my hair with flowers,

C 5

they

they braided it with strings of pearl: they put upon me an artois robe of fatten.—My mother clasped it with her own hands — my women praised my figure — my mother told me I never looked so handsome. — I was silent — I was very sad — my heart was bursting.

When I was almost dressed, my mother looked at her watch;—a portrait of her friend Luzy, which he had presented her with, and which she always wore on its chain, struck my wretched eyes.

My soul seemed to die within me, my lips denied their support, and I fainted in the arms of Nannette. — I will be less prolix, my Maria.

After

After some pains I was brought again to life: the hour was arrived which were to carry us to chapel. The carriages were in readiness—the Marquis came up to advertise us of his being all impatience, and that they waited to convey us to the sacred temple.

As soon as he beheld me, he knelt and pressed my hand to his lips—I made him a respectful—but a distant curtsy—he threw his arms round my waist; and whisperingly reproached me with my coldness.—I answered not—I hardly regarded what he had said—my thoughts were fixed on a far different—and, alas!—a far distant object.

Pardon me, Maria! — I will endeavour to check that idea.

We were conducted to the saloon, where my father and all the company were seated.

As soon as I appeared, my father approached me with a joyful countenance, and a lively step; he opened his arms to receive me, I threw myself into them, and sunk upon his shoulder in a flood of tears: he kissed my cheek with fondness — he called me by a thousand tender names — then presenting me to each of my relations and those of Laufanne's who were present, he put my hand into the Marquis's, and blessed us audibly.

Laufanne I believe appeared handsome and graceful to every eye but mine — his raptures were delicate and
lively

lively — and had my heart acknowledged him with pleasure, I might in those moments have thought him charming.

We soon after repaired to the chapel ; — my good father Francis pronounced the nuptial benediction — he seemed to regard me with an eye of tearful compassion — (for the humane and pious man knows full well the situation of his penitent's heart) he uttered each prayer pertaining to the duties of matrimony, in a clear articulate voice, and with the most solemn devotion.

The Marquis appeared gay, gallant, and happy : my father and mother looked chearful and satisfied. As for
my

my part — on standing up before the altar, my terrors are not to be described — a faintness seized my heart — my eyes grew dim — and I was obliged to lean on my mother's arm to support me from falling during the ceremony.

When it was finished — I involuntarily clasped my hands with fervour, and, looking up towards heaven, I exclaimed, "Ah, blessed God! — it is indeed *now* done beyond redemption!" I was not myself at the instant, my dear Maria; my brain seemed to turn round — I was sensible of nothing but my misery, and forgot where I was, or who were present.

To prevent me from saying more,
the

the Marquis embraced me, and thanked heaven in a gay manner *that it was indeed over*, and that I was irrevocably his. This brought me to myself — I blushed for my imprudence, and sighed inwardly for my insensibility.

The day was spent in festivity by all but me — I strove to conceal my melancholy—but, alas! I succeeded not—and, ah! that I could draw the dark veil of oblivion over that day for ever!

I can tell you no more, my Maria—only this—that I am at present unhappy—but I will endeavour to make up my mind to be as contented as I can, by acting through life with duty
and

and obedience: my conscience at least will never add a sting to those painful reflections, which must at times obtrude; and if I am destined to be always miserable, the remembrance of my having conformed to the wishes of my parents, will in some measure sustain me from sinking under calamity.

Adieu, my Maria! I hope to have better accounts of the health of your mother: tell her, her child Victoria kisses, in idea, those loved hands, which have so often supported her in her infancy.

To the Comtesse De Villeneuve, do I owe many of the happiest hours of my life; and for this valuable relation, and adopted parent, do I profess the most entire respect and affection.

Tell her so, my Maria—and do you be assured, my more than sister, my ever kind and dearest friend, that, in all situations, I shall never cease to be,

Most sincerely yours,

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE.

LETTER IV.

The Marquise DE LAUSANNE,

TO

Monsieur DE MONTVILLE.

SHE is mine Montville;—the finest woman in France is mine!—Long have I loved—but now, how long I may love her, is the question.—Yet, hang it—she has beauty and accomplishments

plishments sufficient to make her ever new—ever interesting ;——but, ah, Montville ! — she returns not my passion with the ardour Lausanne has a right to expect.

She is gloomy — sad — submissive— and gentleness itself—but those smiles —those laughing graces which once adorned her lips, are fled — they fled —yes, my friend, they fled with the handsome — blooming — seducing Luzy ! ah, I was determined he should not bear away the prize ! The Duke De Clarence's daughter with so much beauty — so much wit — and such a fortune, was a match fit only for Lausanne — and he has got her.

What right had that proud rival to
contend

contend for her divine person? — for Victoria De Clarence! — his family, you will say, is as good as mine; his figure perhaps — something better — his address excellent — his accomplishments — well, well! — we will not talk of his accomplishments — but his fortune, that's the thing — his fortune is not equal to Laufanne's; no, he could never adorn my Victoria with the magnificence that will appear to her in all my presents.

I long to shew her at Paris — at Versailles as the Marchioness De Laufanne: how shall I be envied! — Ah, Montville! I talk like an enraptured lover; Colombe's voice has at present no charms for me — nor has Du Thé's grace or figure. I verily believe I

could both hear and behold them without emotion ; — yet I own I cannot stay much longer in the country — Paris is more agreeable ! — besides — I want to try whether the amusements — the admiration — the flattery my wife will receive there — may not inspire her with a little gaiety.

Faith she is at present a charming creature ! — but rather too much in the *penferosa* style for me.

How does the pretty Madame La Bert do ? — that woman, with a little of Victoria's gravity, would be *tou-chante* — and Victoria with a tolerable share of her vivacity would be irresistible.

Farewell ! expect me soon in town, and believe me to be in the mean while,

Yours, DE LAUSANNE.

LETTER V.

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE,
TO
MARIA DE VILLENEAUF.

AH, my Maria! I have left the castle De Clarence — I have bid adieu to its woods — its dear romantic groves — where I have wandered so often with — pray excuse my weakness — I will mention him no more.

The Marquis talked some time of taking me to his hôtel in Paris ; but my father and mother's entreaties induced him to remain until this last week at Clarence. Three days ago he seemed

seemed impatient to be gone, and he desired me to prepare to accompany him to Paris.

I obeyed with a heavy heart—I took a pathetic leave of every object that inhabited a spot so dear to me, as is Clarence. I embraced my mother, my father, in a fit of anguish, and threw myself into the carriage that waited to convey me from them. Laufanne stepped in after me — we drove from the gates — a deep silence ensued.

At length I began to recollect whose presence I was in, and turning to the Marquis, I asked him some questions concerning the roads of Italy, which he had lately travelled. — I was not answered, Maria — I ventured to
look

look up in his face — my God ! — I never saw so deformed a countenance — his cheeks glowed with the suppression of his resentment — his eyes were suddenly half closed — he bit his lips — and every feature appeared convulsed.

I was shocked — I will own to you I was terrified. I knew not what ailed him — and fearing that he was not well, I put my hand upon his arm, and enquired where was his pain ?

Would you believe that this obsequious lover — threw from him with violence my hand, and answered, *that I was his pain ?*

Ah, can I tell you what I endured at that minute ! — no, it is impossible ! — This was the first time I had been
used

used harshly by any one but my father — and as I loved my father, I could more easily reconcile myself to his will : — But here! — yet I must forbear to declare my hatred to a man, whom it is my duty to respect.

You, Maria, who know the timid nature of my temper, will suppose, that I burst into a flood of tears on receiving so unkind a repulse ; — but there you will mistake ; my soul was tortured it is true—but my pride prevented my testifying it by tears ; — I sighed indeed from the inmost recesses of my heart, though I uttered not a syllable — not one reproach.

The Marquis turned his eyes towards me some minutes after—he beheld

held me an image of patience—of humility—he was touched with remorse—he sighed—he attempted soon to seize that hand, he had so lately cast off with disdain—but it was now my turn to convince him that I had feeling; and I coldly endeavoured to disengage it from him.

He threw his arms round me as I sat. “You are offended my sweet love!—I entreat your pardon—but your tears at leaving your father’s house (or rather at coming with me) shocked and grieved me—I repented it too harshly—but come!—you will confess I had reason.”

My answer was very full, and very cool. I hinted that my marriage vow

of obedience would, I believed, be often tried by him: that as long as I could oblige him I would do it; but that if he supposed I could appear indifferent at meeting with, or parting from my parents merely to gratify a caprice of his, I would not—nay—I could not promise him obedience there. I added, that my sensibility had ever been my greatest misfortune, but I hoped it was so directed, as never to become to me a reproach.

The Marquis looked sneeringly at me, and pronounced half articulately—half not, the name of Luzy. I pretended to take no notice of this insult—and he has been very civil—very distant since.

Shall

Shall I confess that I am not sorry for this change in his manner towards me—the caresses of one whom we behold with disgust—but where does my pen carry me?—oh, rub out that sentence from your memory! — I would now do it from the paper — but you have charged me to let the slips of my heart appear to you, as they are made. — Well then, it shall go — but you must instruct me how to command my feelings, even when I am speaking to a friend.

I am going this evening to the Italian comedy. My good friend Julia de Sanscerre is now in Paris, and is to be one of the party. Adieu, my Maria!

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE.

L E T T E R VI.

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE,

T O

MARIA DE VILLENEAUF.

MY life is at present a continual round of dissipation ; and without enjoying any of the pleasures which my husband gives into with avidity, I am obliged to go through them all at the expence of health — rest—and peace.

What a misfortune it is, my dear Maria, to be necessitated to live with a person whose turn of mind — whose temper—whose delights are so widely different ! Our house is crouded with the very best company in Paris it is true ; but to have it always crouded,

is

is terrible ! The Duke de Maurice is my shadow—he haunts me eternally.

I am thought, it seems, a beauty ; and on that account I hear nothing but flattery. Can they suppose, my Maria, that a pretty face — that an elegant person, can only belong to a fool?—If so, I am treated as I ought to be :—but if otherwise, why am I not spoken to in a style that my education would instruct me to enjoy ? I am heartily sick of Paris, and all I have seen in it. Would I could bury myself in some remote corner of France, “ Forgetting and forgotten !”

There is a Madame La Bert here, who is handsome, witty, and much admired. She has nothing that can re-

commend her in my eyes. Her wit is too gross for a delicate ear, and her vivacity borders on assurance. The Marquis is quite her cecisbeo, and she seems to enjoy his assiduities. — To be plain with you, my dear Maria, I should be uneasy about their intimacy did I love the Marquis. As it is — I can console myself but too easily. — I say *but* — because, what I feel for him, is not the affection I should feel for a husband.

The other night at a ball given by the Duke De Maurice, after having danced some English dances, I found the room too warm; and taking Julia De Sanscerre by the arm, we walked into an apartment which appeared
cooler

cooler than the rest, from having, as we thought, no persons in it.

We had not advanced many steps when I heard a female voice say, "Ah, Marquis! — should you ever give me reason to doubt your fidelity!" —

"Fear nothing," returned a man in well known accents, "you have charms sufficient to attach me to you for ever."

We proceeded quite into the room soon after this speech, and I beheld the Marquis De Lausanne, seated by the handsome La Bert, with one of her hands pressed to his lips, whilst his arm encircled her waist as she sat.

I started on perceiving really that these lovers were two I had reason to

know so well, but we retreated from the scene, faster than we had approached it: their confusion was manifest, and I left them to recover of it, in whatever way they thought proper.

Julia de Sanscerre seemed more shocked than myself. "My Victoria," cried she, pressing my hand, "that woman will be the ruin of your husband, if reason comes not to his aid." I answered not. "Ah!" added my good friend, "the Duke de Clarence has thrown away a pearl of inestimable worth." — Julia applied her hand to her eyes.

As for my part, my affliction was more intolerable when I gave him my hand, and found him an enraptured lover.

lover. I lamented now the badness of his morals—but indeed, my dear Maria, Madame La Bert I forgave with great cordiality.

A mortification worse than this I endured soon after. The Duke de Maurice, Comte de Parte, the Chevalier de Mondonnoir, Monsieur de Montville, Julia de Sanscerre, two other ladies and myself, were standing up to dance, when a buzz about the room of “how handsome he is! how elegant! what a man!” reached our ears—and curiosity suspended for a while our desire to begin the dance: it was however ungratified till we finished; when I saw the Marquis de Palmene, introduce to the Duke de Maurice, the

handsome Comte de Solignac ; whom you may remember to have been Luzy's bosom friend.

He had just left Italy, and parted with this friend. He arrived in Paris that morning, and the Marquis de Palmene brought him with him to this ball given by the most magnificent and elegant man in Paris. I stood near the Duke as he advanced.

Ah, my God ! — when I beheld the Comte de Solignac — what did I not feel ! shame — confusion — horror ! — he looked at me — our eyes met — I threw mine down as conscious of guilt : he shortly after came up to me.

“ Well, charming Victoria ! ” cried
he,

he, "I congratulate you on your nuptials — I heard of them but this morning — the news had not arrived in Italy when I left it: alas! — I wish it had — I have an unfortunate friend there, madam, who will stand in need of some consolation when he hears it."

During this speech I had not courage to look at Solignac — my eyes were fixed on the ground, and tears fell from them in abundance. The Comte seemed almost as much affected as myself. He took my hand — he drew me apart from the rest of the company.

"How comes it, fair Victoria, that those vows which you made to

D 6

my

my friend Luzy, and which were registered in heaven, have been broken through by you with contempt — and scattered to the winds? Ah, woman, woman!” added the gentle Solognac, “who can fathom the depth of thy dissimulation—of thy profound art! who could suppose that, in this too beauteous form, a false — nay! — a cruel heart was deposited! I am perhaps too warm! — but when I reflect upon the worth — the injured worth of my Luzy — I cannot promise to speak to you in the language of softness.”

“My lord,” cried I, hurt at what he had said, and covered with confusion, “blame me not too rashly — to-morrow

morrow you shall receive a letter from me — my unhappy fate shall there be told — shall be explained too justly ! — Retire, my Lord — my emotion is observed — think better of me — and ah, remember, — I have a father whose commands are absolute.”

This, my Maria, I thought I owed to the rectitude of my own heart—to my long and sincere friendship for Solignac: I knew him before I had ever seen Luzy—and Luzy’s intimacy with him did not abate the ardour of my esteem for Solignac.—Oh! when I look back——pardon me!—I will not forget that I am the wife of Laufanne.

After speaking to the Comte, I retired from the ball. My agitations were
violent ;

violent; my soul seemed oppressed with a weight of woe—I threw myself into my carriage, and was brought home more dead than alive.

Nannette, as she undressed me, often wiped away my tears, and the poor creature could scarcely restrain her sobs: at that time I was almost insensible of my situation—but reflection has since painted it to me in its true colours.

What could Nannette have supposed!—but no matter—Nannette, I fear, guesses too truly the cause of all my griefs.

As soon as I had dismissed my woman, I retired to my closet; and there penned the following billet.

To

* * * * *

To the Comte DE SOLIGNAC.

WHAT can I say, my Lord, in extenuation of a subject, that has been the cause of all my sorrows, without acting inconsistently with that duty, to which I have so largely sacrificed?

My father — my husband — how will they appear to the amiable Solignac, if the daughter — the wife accuses them of cruelty and indelicacy?

Ah, my Lord! — that heaven which bore witness to the vows I made Luzy, can justify me from the charge of falseness or dissimulation — those vows are still in-
violated

violated by my heart — but my filial — my trembling obedience submitted to the harsh commands of a parent — and I was dragged an unwilling victim to the altar with Laufanne.

What remains more for me to say? — nothing—but to assure you, that tho' my heart rebels against this tyranny — my duty to the Marquis — the virtue of my soul will forbid me to behold again a man whom I know to be too amiable — too eloquent for the repose of that peace, which my innocence alone can now ensure me.

To God — and to you my friend, I hope I shall stand acquitted for my marriage with the Marquis — and my determination never to see Luzy more.

Alas,

Alas, poor Luzy! — my heart bleeds for the pangs thou wilt endure, when thou hearest that Victoria has betrayed thee to thy rival!

Ah, my Lord, could I add those pangs to the sufferings that already corrode my bosom — Luzy should not even sigh at my remembrance.

Adieu, amiable, generous Solignac! be ever assured of my friendship.

After I had sealed it I became more composed — I had indeed owned to him, that the Marquis was not the object of my choice; but I had sworn to respect him as my husband — to preserve towards him my fidelity; that thought gave me comfort, and I went to bed with more content
than

than I had done for many nights. The next morning I dispatched Nannette with it to the Comte, and she brought me back these lines :

* * * * *

“ TOO amiable — too unfortunate Victoria — I feel your sufferings, I applaud your virtue ! Solignac weeps over your affliction, and in that one word, comprehends the everlasting despair of his friend. I will leave Paris — it is become odious to me. I can hear of nothing but the name of Laufanne, instead of that of Clarence. You are the admiration — the envy of this city.

Beware of the duke de Maurice !

I am,

DE SOLIGNAC.”

“Beware of the Duke de Maurice!” repeated I to myself—yes, my good friend, I will beware of his art—of his flattery.

At that moment, the Marquis entered my dressing room: I blushed at his appearance, for I still held Solignac’s letter in my hand.

The Marquis is a polite man, and a fashionable husband—he enquired gallantly about my health, and hoped all the billetdoux I received were dictated with that elegance my beauty had a right to command. I put the letter in my pocket, and assured him, I neither received, or wished to receive a billetdoux.

He smiled, and tapping my cheek,

ex-

exclaimed, "What! — not from the Duke de Maurice?"

I burst into tears—the mention of his name now alarmed me.

"Ah, my Lord!" cried I, "I do not like the Duke — I detest Paris — suffer me to retire for a little while to your seat at Lausanne."

The Marquis hummed a tune—paused—then looking at me seriously, he exclaimed, "Why, madam, you are at liberty to go where you please—I do not find it convenient myself to leave Paris—but that I am sure will be no objection to your doing so. Adieu, my timid—pretty—prudent Marchioness—take care that the sight of a billetdoux does not throw you into an irrecoverable fit!"

The Marquis left me in a state of mind — in a disposition of soul my pen would not, if it could, describe.

Farewell, I am summoned to receive the company who are to celebrate in a ball here, this night, the birth day of the husband of your friend.

Ah unhappy day ! what did it not portend to the destiny of your

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE.

LETTER VII.

THE COMTE DE LUZY,

TO

THE COMTE DE SOLIGNAC.

I HAVE little to say to you my friend — I have nothing more to do

do with the world. Victoria De Clarence is married — my father last night breathed his last — there is no other circumstance that can affect me!

I shall call on you at Paris to take of you an embrace, that shall never more be repeated. I am unfit for society — my soul is torn with a thousand conflicting passions — I am wilder than madness itself — I am fiercer than a savage! grief harmonizes not my mind — it is all tumult — discord — and despair!

Oh Victoria! my soft, my gentle mistress! — but I forget my injuries.

Solignac I am coming — meet me at Palmene's. I shall enter Paris
without

without attendants — without parade.
One day — one night will I give to
friendship — and then forget that
such a wretch exists as

LUZY.

LETTER VIII.

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE,

TO

MARIA DE VILLENEAUF.

MY name is the general topic of
Paris, and with it is joined that
of the Duke De Maurice. My hus-
band fees his attention — his assiduity
to me — he encourages them by tel-
ling

ling the Duke in a half laughing strain, *that perseverance alone can conquer my heart* : he insults me after, in a whisper by prophecying his success.

Can a man be so lost to all sentiment ? — nay, — can he be so regardless of his own honor, as to suffer close siege to be made to his wife's virtue ? 'tis horrible ! I treat the Duke with a degree of coldness and reserve, which awes him into respect—and the Marquis with an air of contempt which his folly and his immoral character inspire.

Ah, my Maria, can I help it ? — It is in vain that I have shewn Laufanne proofs of my obedience — it is in vain my having seemed to regard him as my

Lord

Lord and husband! Laufanne is weak — is conceited — is wicked: the affection of a virtuous woman has no charms for him; I am neglected whole weeks for a set of wretches, whose very names carry with them an idea of infamy. His health — his fortune are yielded up to them, and he never returns to me, but to enjoy, at the expence of my peace, a constant round of company and dissipation at his own house.

At a superb supper given last night by Julia De Sanscerre, the Duke De Maurice placed himself on one side of me; and the elegant Marquis De Palmene on the other.

The Duke endeavoured to gain

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my

my attention by the most refined gallantry. The Marquis indeed possessed it, because I knew his flattery was merely assumed to prevent the dangerous Maurice from having opportunities of forwarding his suit.

The Duke looked chagrined at my preference of the Marquis — Palmene regarded it not, but seemed to encrease in politeness, in wit, and pleasure.

“ You are a happy man, Palmene!” cried the jealous Maurice, on seeing him fasten my bracelet which had slipped.

“ And I am not insensible to my happiness, my Lord,” replied the gallant Palmene, and carried my hand to his lips. The

The Duke arose—he was violently agitated—he walked from me to conceal his resentment—but returned soon with a more placid countenance.

He proposed vingt-un, I consented to make one, in order to engage him at cards, and to prevent his tormenting me with a conversation in itself too particular, and too gallant for a virtuous married woman to attend to, without an infringement on that line of delicacy which I have lain down as a rule of my conduct.

We played — the party was large — I won at the beginning, but I got up a very considerable loser. I lost to two English noblemen, (strangers to me, whom I had never before seen) fifty

Louis—I had not so much about me. The Duke offered his purse—I would not accept of it.

“My Lord,” said I to one of those gentlemen, “you do not leave Paris before to-morrow morning, I hope!” He *assured me that he should not; — but were he to do so, it would be of no consequence—when he returned, he would remember that the Marchioness De Lausanne was his debtor, and he would do himself the honour to remind her of it in person.*

I thanked him, but seeing at that moment the Marquis De Palmene, who approached and offered me the sum, I accepted it, and discharged these debts of honour.

The

The Duke seemed vexed—he looked sternly at Palmene—and viewed me with an air of indignation: he drew near, and whispered, “You have suffered, Madam, in my esteem—you are lost in my opinion. If you prefer that odious figure, have delicacy sufficient to keep your tasteless amour a secret from the world. A lover’s purse you can use freely—that of a friend’s you disdain.”

He paused for want of breath—his passion deprived him of it. I assumed an air of chilling haughtiness—I arose from my seat—I turned full upon him—and with a look of mingled indignation and contempt exclaimed, “Pray, my Lord, how long

is it since your grace has taken into your hands the reins of my government? — I like no man as a lover but my husband — you least of all.”

I turned away. — My air — my manner froze him. He was struck into silence. — He threw himself on a sofa that was near — while I slipped out of the room, and stepping into my carriage, I got home without enduring more either from his officious gallantry, or from his insulting jealousy.

He has been twice here this morning — I have excused myself from seeing him. He is of all men the most dangerous — else why Solignac’s caution! It has given me an aversion to the Duke that is perhaps unjust —
yet

yet it is safe, and I do not reason against it.

The Comte De Solignac, I find, has not left Paris—he came hither just now with Julia De Sanscerre, who has pressed me to go with her to-morrow to her Chateau, which is fifteen miles from this city. I am to spend with her a few days that are, she says, to be dedicated to friendship alone.

“ From the bustle of Paris, my dear,” said she, pressing my hand, “ you will have leisure to recover those charming looks, which care and fatigue have cast a cloud over.”

Julia viewed me at that moment with eyes of compassion. My hus-

E 4

band's

band's libertine life is well known, and she pities me sincerely. I promised to go with her. Solignac is to be with us.

My husband left Paris some days ago with Madame La Bert, and many others—they are gone on a party of pleasure.

Poor Madame La Bert!—if she depends upon the fidelity of her lover, she will be too credulous; every pretty opera singer in the metropolis can claim a title to his heart, by putting on a few of those artful blandishments which have often taken in unwary youth.

Laufanne is however old enough to see the fallacy of such allurements—
but

but his folly—or his love of the most unworthy of our sex (which you please) is too powerful to suffer any motive whatever to withdraw him from them.

He will not return I hope before my visit to Julia De Sanscerre has been paid. If he should, I shall be upbraided for being out of the way when his company ought to be received.

I am unhappy, my dear Maria—indeed I am! and where is the balm that can relieve my distempered soul? —Ah, Luzy, Luzy!—had fate permitted —

You may perceive, Maria, I give into amusements; you may also perceive I suffer the most trifling subjects to engross my

pen.—I sing—I talk—I dance—it is all in vain, believe me.

The image of Luzy is ever present to my view, is ever present in my heart.—After spending nights of the utmost inquietude—after wandering with him in terrific dreams, amidst scenes of blood and horror—I arise—I hasten on an undress—I fly to chapel—I prostrate myself at the foot of the sacred altar—I entreat for patience, resignation and fortitude, to overcome a passion that became criminal when I married his rival.

Ah, my Maria!—does my God abandon me?—else, why when I rise from my knees does my heart still warmly beat—still heave some sighs of

of regret for the amiable—the lost
Luzy?

My loved Luzy—if I may yet dare
to call thee so—think not too harshly
of me.—Remember, Maria, that you
have often told me,—“ One act of
filial obedience was worth more in the
fight of heaven, than any sacrifice
whatever.”

Behold then—in this one act—I
immolated that to duty, which was
dearer to me than life itself—I con-
sented to resign Luzy for ever!

I will write no more 'till I arrive at
Julia De Sanscerre's; my spirits are
fluttered—my fears bode ten thousand
evils. The Duke De Maurice perse-
cutes me—The Chevalier De Mondo-

noir sends every hour a billetdoux to my door. I bewail that I am thought handsome—it has been productive of the greatest misfortunes of my life.

Ah, my Maria! I have a strange scene to unfold—my hand is unsteady—my heart is bursting.—I write from Julia De Sanscerre's.

To what purpose, my Maria, are we given these refined feelings—these delicate organs, but to make us unhappy! why did I not behold him, whom my soul loveth, without agitation—without such exquisite emotions as deprived me of utterance?—Oh, I gave myself up to them!—I for some moments permitted my heart to forget, that Lausanne possessed a fatal
marriage

marriage vow, which was most solemnly ratified in heaven—and that, *that vow* was made to him by me.— But I will explain the matter—you are tortured by suspense.

Julia De Sanscerre and Solignac called for me yesterday morning before seven o'clock in her post-coach, and we set off immediately for this elegant and beautiful spot, which Madame De Sanscerre adorns with every charm of nature.

Our journey was swift, gay, and happy. We arrived about nine o'clock at the end of it, and the remainder of the day was spent in a manner the most agreeable that could be devised.

We read—we walked—we played
on

on the softest instruments, and our voices aided the harmony of those sounds, which we drew from our lutes. Solignac was quite himself, and Julia De Sanscerre lost not, for one moment, her charming and delicate vivacity.

Towards the dusk of the evening, she proposed that we should visit her temple consecrated to Diana. It is situated in the thickest part of a delightful wood, about a mile from the house. Its structure without is magnificent, and it is fitted up with every charm of elegant simplicity. Upon the top glittered a resplendant crescent, and upon the door were these words inscribed :

“ Tra-

“ Traveller, enter without fear.
Innocence, Chastity and Virtue,
Here reside.”

We entered — refreshments were prepared — but we saw not a soul — every thing transporting — and seemed to have been executed by some invisible, some magical hand. Solignac took a German flute that lay near — Julia De Sanscerre accompanied it with her voice. The moon now began to assume its empire over the night, and with its clear and soft refulgency darted its rays upon the Temple. I was affected — my bosom beat with the most delightful sensations.

The

The beauty of the night — the tranquility that reigned throughout — but most of all, the harmony of the sounds which Sanscerre and Solignac filled the room with, occasioned I know not what in my soul, and I burst into a flood of tears—Solignac arose, and took hold of my hand.

“ Charming Victoria,” cried he with emotion, “ your gentle breast acknowledges the powers of virtuous sensibility. I have one favour to ask of you, which if I thought it were incompatible with your delicacy, your honour, I would not make.”

Julia De Sanscerre, at that instant wiped away some drops that fell from her eyes, and bade me be assured of
her

her prudence—of her regard for my reputation.

I was alarmed at this serious introduction—I begged of them to speak; and earnestly enquired what they would have me do?

“ My friend Luzy,” replied Solignac (I tremble at the name) “ my friend Luzy is about to leave France for ever—he is now here—he wishes to bid you an eternal adieu. He has lost his father;—he has lost his Victoria;—what then has the world in store which he can prize!—Dejected—despairing—miserable—he entreats you to admit him once more to your presence—to suffer him at your feet to pour out a prayer for your repose.

“ Yet—

“ Yet—if you consent not—if you can doubt of the purity of those sentiments which you have known so long—if you can suspect his honour—he will never seek this last, this poor atonement—he will quit France—he will leave Julia De Sanscerre’s house, without daring to intrude into your presence. Luzy, without one single comfort—will bury himself for ever in some obscure corner of the globe—far remote from the society of all he holds dear.”

He paused; Solignac applied his handkerchief to his eyes—he was much agitated. Julia De Sanscerre took my hand.

“ Would I, do you think, my Victoria,”

toria," said she, "make any request to you, that could be derogatory to your virtue? — God forbid! — I have ever been your friend — nor would I have made you this entreaty, but that I have beheld the altered unhappy object of my pity. He leaves France to-morrow — he embarks for Martinico — we shall never more behold him. Refuse him not the only gleam of consolation yet remaining — a last sigh breathed before you — a last look towards the centre of his happiness."

Julia De Sanscerre wept — I continued motionless — I was in the most dreadful perplexity.

"Ah, my friends!" I at length exclaimed, "let not your pity for Luzy involve

involve me in the sad reflection of having acted inconsistently with those delicate sentiments which my husband has a right to claim from me. — If I behold Luzy—will not some rebellious wishes — will not some regrets take possession of me ? Ah !” added I, at the same time throwing myself into the arms of Julia, “save me from deviating, even in idea, from the duty of my marriage vow.”

A voice—a well known voice at that moment issued from a distant part of the Temple, and pronounced —

“ Solignac—I charge thee press her no farther ; — perhaps she is right ! tell her, Luzy will bless her to the latest minute of his life.”

I started from the arms of my friend — I clasped my hands together with fervor, and fell senseless on my knees — what become of me for a short while I know not — but when I recovered, I found myself on a sofa near the window, and my two friends leaning anxiously over me.

“ Fear nothing, Madam,” cried Solignac, “ you shall not be longer persecuted. — The poor wretch was detained by me till this night, in hopes of seeing you. Forgive therefore his presumption, since I alone was the cause of it, and forget him for ever, who has hopelessly aspired to your friendship.

“ Come, charming Victoria, possess
yourself :

yourself: think no more of this interruption of our happiness — Luzy will leave — nay, is perhaps gone by this time, and your delicate virtue will no longer be endangered.”

“ Cruel Solignac !” exclaimed I with heart-rending sorrow. “ Cruel Solignac !” and my tears told all.

“ Grieve no more, my dear Victoria,” said Julia ; “ if you choose to bid Luzy adieu, he shall be summoned instantly—if you do not—think no more of this unlucky scheme, and perplex yourself no further.”

I paused a few moments — I arose from the sofa—I walked up and down the room in some confusion — at length the reflection of the wrongs I
had

had done him, rushed at once into my mind, and the cruelty of prohibiting him this trifling recompence shocked me. — I endeavoured to prepare my soul to receive him — I resolved to behold him as my friend, and to banish the idea of lover.

“ There is nothing more to be considered, my Lord, the conflict is over.

“ Tell your friend, sir, that I am willing to see him — that I desire to exculpate that part of my conduct towards him, which he may suppose to have been injurious. Conscious of my own innocence in assenting to this interview, I will venture for once to act contrary to my opinion.”

Solignac

Solignac stayed only to thank me — he was out of the room the instant after.

And now, my Maria, you will remember those resolutions I had made. — *Those resolutions!* — weak, weak supports! — they deserted me at the time in which I stood most in need of their assistance.

Soon after Solignac's departure from the apartment where we were, a scene drew back, and discovered a well illuminated saloon. We walked into it, and it closed again behind us — I was sadly fluttered — I appeared as if I had gone into some enchanted castle — the genius of it I knew to be Virtue — and with her I could not fear:
how-

—however, my spirits sunk, and I threw myself breathless into a chair.

At length the door opened — Solignac entered — and after him — — ah, my God, it was Luzy indeed! — I arose at their entrance — I involuntarily clasped my hands together — my knees trembled — I was ready to faint.

Luzy approached me with respect — he bowed in silence before me, and big tears ran down his manly face. Julia De Sanscerre's sobs were audible, and she quitted the room to conquer them. The Comte De Solignac retired to a window with his back turned towards us.

We stood up, my Maria — our eyes fixed on each other — tears were all

the eloquence we used — and surely they told more than language could express! After some minutes I endeavoured to speak.

“ My Lord — my Lord,” — cried I ——— I could go no farther — the sound died upon my lips. He threw himself at my feet. In that one minute, my Maria, I forgot my vows at the altar — I beheld Luzy as the object of my most ardent love — as the Lord of all my wishes — I sunk upon his bosom in a flood of grief—he clasped me in his arms—our sighs — our sobs — our tears were intermingled.

At last I began to reflect (though in the embrace of Luzy) that I owed to my husband a far different conduct —
that

that my duty, my delicacy — should forbid me to indulge Luzy in such proofs of tenderness. That notion sufficed — I disengaged myself from his arms, and strove to assume a more composed, a more determined air.

Luzy forgot not, for an instant, the respect due to my character—due to my virtue—he suffered me to quit his embrace—and kissed my hand as a proof of his obedience.

“ My Lord,” cried I with a voice almost inarticulate, “ you see before you an unhappy weak woman.—After what has passed, I need not say, that you are, and ever will be the object of my affection.

“ A father’s stern commands—a hus-

band's rights have rendered this passion no longer innocent—I must subdue it —I must resolve to behold you no more. Farewell, too amiable Luzy! —forget —renounce me for ever!” — He once more threw his arms around me.

“ Renounce you! — exclaimed he, “ ah, teach me how!” and he pressed me to his bosom. “ Forget you! — May that hour be my last! —— No, most adored Victoria, I will only promise that which I know I can perform — I consent to banish myself for ever from your sight—will that satisfy your cruelty?—will that content your inexorable virtue?”

I wept—he went on. —— “ Every
moment

moment that I stay is bliss—but that dreadful one must arrive at last, which will separate us for ever!—I promised only a few fleeting minutes to trouble you—I will keep to my word—I will tear myself from thee.”

He then pressed me faster in his arms. — “Victoria,” cried he, “Adieu!” — yet still he motioned not to depart.—“One last kiss!” added he—and he took a thousand.

It was now, my dear Maria, that I felt the imprudence of my behaviour—I told him that I did severely feel it and that his absence was now absolutely necessary.—He arose—he begged me to pardon him—he kneeled again, and implored from heaven its

choicest blessings on me. ——

“Well, Madam,” cried he with a tremulous and sorrowful accent, “you now behold me about to take of you an everlasting adieu. — To-morrow I embark for Martinico — to-morrow, dear Victoria” — and he pressed my hand to his heart — “to-morrow will be the last day which will see me in France !”

Luzy,” replied I in an agony of grief, “our cruel fate commands of us this separation. I will not dissuade you from your purpose, but will endeavour to imitate your virtue.

“Adieu, my best, my dearest friend !” and I threw myself into his arms ; “adieu for ever ; Victoria’s
heart

heart may break—but her duty — her virtue forbid that she should complain.”

After many embraces — after a torrent of tears — and a tempest of sighs — we tore ourselves from each other. — Solignac conducted his friend from my sight—and Madame De Sancerre hastened to relieve my anguish.

When I beheld her, I wrung my hands in silence — I wept upon her bosom.—Julia De Sancerre talked me into composure — she reasoned — and sympathized with me by turns.

Soon after Solignac came back with tearful eyes, and informed us that the Marquis De Palmene and Luzy had set off for Bourdeaux that moment, from whence Luzy was to

embark on the stormy ocean.—

Ah, Heaven—ah, blessed God be his protection! — what will become of me, if through my unhappy fate he should be lost? — ah, horrid idea! — cruel suggestion!

And now, my dear Maria, what will you think of me? — what will you say to all this? you will call my behaviour weak — you may perhaps think me wanting in delicacy — do not suppose the latter — I could not bear that you should hold me deficient in the greatest charm of woman.

Put yourself into my situation, imagine that you behold Lindor, a despairing lover, undone by your cruelty.—Your sensible heart would reach

to

to him a hand of pity — a gleam of comfort — surely that would not be incompatible with innocence ! — if it is, how lost is your Victoria !

I am still at Julia De Sanſcerre's, though every hour I ſtay but encreaſes my affliction. I walk towards that fatal Temple, and behold him, in idea, whom my ſoul loveth.—I hear his voice in every wind — I hear his ſtep in the ruſtling of every leaf — this place nourishes this deſtructive poiſon — I muſt fly from it—yet whether ſhall I fly ? — ah, my God ! is it to the houſe of Lauſanne ?

I am determined to ſet off this night for Paris — I have told Julia De Sanſcerre of my intention, ſhe and So-

lignac will accompany me — they are all goodness, and kindly bear with my unhappy caprices.

Adieu, my Maria. — I have written thee a volume. Do not chide me in your next. — I am not well — I am not proof against these ills of fortune — against thy displeasure least of all.

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE.

LETTER IX.

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE,

TO

MARIA DE VILLENEAUF.

LINDOR presented me with your letter yesterday, my dear Maria.

All I can say in answer to it is, that
your

your friendship is my greatest blessing, and that your part of a censor, takes not from you that of indulgence and humanity.

At the moment you point out a folly, you soften it by your pity; and show, by your judgment, how to rectify it. I rejoice that I possess such a friend as my Maria, and while heaven will spare her to me, I cannot be totally unhappy.

When Lindor was presented to me, I was immersed in a crowd—our house was full of company. He approached me with all that grace and elegance so natural to him;—but what was above all, with a look of sensibility in which I read his pity for your friend.

My affection for Lindor, was always great — but I thought I never loved him more than at that instant. The Marquis De L. V. — attended him to me, and told me in a whisper that his friend Lindor, he perceived, was too much affected to speak, but that in the course of the evening, he hoped I would give him an opportunity of saying a few words to me. I was distressed myself—but with a nod of approbation I signified an assent to do so.

I took care to do as he wished, and, in about an hour after his entrance, I walked with him into another apartment, which I thought more private than it proved to be.

As

As soon as we were alone, the amiable Lindor embraced me, and without uttering a syllable, burst into tears; mine flowed plentifully upon his shoulder, and sighs of distress broke from my oppressed heart.

After a pause of some moments, he told me, in an almost inarticulate voice, that he had left his Maria well, that he had a letter for me, which he would not delay to give me—but that he was too much overpowered with a thousand conflicting ideas at that time, to render his stay with me either delightful or proper; and presenting me with your letter, he bowed, and was about to depart, when I called after him to appoint a time for my seeing

seeing him without interruption.—

He proposed the following evening at my own house — I agreed to it, and he took his leave.

As soon as Lindor was gone, I threw myself into a chair, and without breaking the seal of your packet, I kissed it with fervor.

“ Dear loved hand !” cried I, as I held it to my lips—“ thou wilt tell me all — thou wilt speak wisdom to my heart—thou only canst lead me to the path of happiness — thy unerring dictates will I follow — thy courageous precepts learn and practise.”

At these words I was about to break the seal, when I beheld the Duke De Maurice before me. He
viewed

viewed me with an eye of levity and contempt; his attitude was familiar, and the words he dared to pronounce were still more so.

“ Ah, charming Marchioness! — I congratulate you on your change of disposition. There was a time when mountain snows were not more cold or chaste—when that fair bosom was impregnated to love—and those beautiful lips announced thy cruelties alone.

“ Now it is far otherwise — every pretty fellow can claim from thee a languishing smile, a tender look — but one more happy than the rest, can press thee in his arms — can drink thy falling tears — can fix an hour to meet thee in secret — and can present you
with

with an amorous billetdoux, to contemplate during the tedious minutes of his absence. — Ah, happy man !” added Maurice, and he fell on one knee before me. “ Ah happy man !” he attempted to kiss my hands. I started from my seat.

“ My Lord,” cried I, almost choaked with indignation, “ how dare you intrude thus upon my solitude ! — I am not the guilty wretch thy poisonous breath would taint me with the name of. — That man is a near relation — that man is a friend whom I esteem. — This letter is from a female—it comes from the daughter of the Comtesse De Villeneuveuf.

“ Be gone,” continued I, looking at him

him with a degree of haughtiness I did not think myself possessed of, “be gone, my Lord, and never see me more!” I was about to fly the apartment—but the insolent wretch caught hold of my hand.

“Consider, fair Marchioness,” cried he, “that you are now in my power : — I have proofs that would for ever blast your fame. — You carry on the matter bravely. — You are pleased to call *my breath* a poisonous one : — take care, lovely Victoria, that you do not find it so! — take care that *this breath, taints not your fair name!* — ah, rather let it utter the softest accents of love ! rather let it infuse into thy soul a degree of pity for him, who

who lives but to adore you — who exists but in the hope, that you will not for ever despise his passion — his unshaken constancy !”

During the latter end of this speech, the Duke threw into his eyes all the softness of that passion, for which he pleaded ; his fine teeth and well turned mouth, were shewn to the highest advantage. His elegant form was supported by a large Corinthian pillar well lighted, and though he held me, and that by force, his figure appeared easy, tender, and beseeching.

At that time I was really so much enraged, that he seemed to me a hideous monster, sent into the world only to heighten my torments. Reflection,

fection, however, in a cooler moment, has shewn him to me, such as he really would have been thought by most other women, a graceful and seducing lover.

“My Lord,” replied I, in as cool a manner as I could assume, “the insults I endure from you, are really intolerable, and become more frequent every day. If, however, you dare to mention to me again a subject which my duty forbids me to listen to, I will, at all risks, complain of it to the Marquis De Laufanne.”

“By heavens,” returned he, “you may publish it to the world! Laufanne’s is not the only sword I would engage with, for such a prize. — No,
Madam,

Madam, if every hand was armed to protect you from me, my love should find you out, and offer itself a panting victim at your feet."

I was now provoked beyond all patience—I beheld the Duke De Maurice in a light too odious to describe. I perceived his scheme was to terrify me, with the loss of character, if I did not actually consent to deserve that it should be blasted by listening to his addresses.

My pride — my virtue resented such vile treatment, and, breaking from him with infinite anger and disdain, I bade him to beware of insulting the daughter of the Duke De Clarence—of insulting the wife of the Marquis
De

De Lausanne — but most of all to beware of exposing his own vanity to a declaration from me, which would at once convince him, that I saw through his artifices, and despised his character. Saying this, I quitted the room with perturbation and disquiet.

I soon after joined the company who were at cards in the saloon, and as I leaned over the chair of Julia De Sanfcerre, observing her play, the Duke De Maurice approached my ear.

“ You are licensed, Madam, to treat me as you think proper — from your lips I can bear every thing they choose to inflict — but let me caution you against beholding more that mission

nion of your favours, — he may enter your house alive, but by heaven he shall never leave it in safety!”

To this insolence of the Duke, I made no reply, and affected to have given it no attention; I however dispatched an excuse this morning to Lindor, for not seeing him as I had promised, but begged of him to meet me at chapel, to-morrow morning at eight o'clock; where I must frame some apology to him, for not receiving him at my house during his short stay at Paris. Unhappy fate—how can I extricate myself from the difficulties that surround me?

This affair has really so discomposed me, that I have not had leisure to reflect

reflect on my other misfortunes. Ah, Luzy! — where-ever thou goest—in what ever dangers thou art immerfed — by what perils furrounded — thy Victoria — thy tender, thy constant Victoria will visit thee in idea—will share thy sorrows—will wish them all her own!

Adieu, my Maria—you must plead for me to Lindor when you see him—let him not know the truth—but, ah! — let him not think that I can love him less—that I can ever neglect the friend of my earliest days—bid him be assured of my most unchangeable affection

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE.

LETTER X.

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE,

TO

MARIA DE VILLENEAUF.

THE veil of politeness which the Marquis De Lausanne once assumed, has of late been entirely thrown off, and he is now either sullen and abrupt, or harsh and petulant.

His pleasures (alas my friend! should that name be given to libertinism?) absorb him wholly, and I have drawn on me the most violent indignation for daring to remonstrate with him on his manner of living.

I urged

I urged the preservation of his health, if he disregarded every other consideration; but I was soon made sensible that weak minds are always the most offended by advice. That remark I have often heard you make—the truth of it, however, I have learned by experience.

Madame La Bert possesses him entirely; she is too abandoned by every moral principle, to regard the censures that are hourly thrown upon her. — They are become the topic of Paris, and their names are never mentioned but with satire and contempt.

As for my part, my dear Maria, his politeness was all I desired — was all that was necessary towards making

me *not quite* miserable—and even that I am now deprived of.

Lausanne plays — plays high — and as his skill is not equal to his love of gaming, he loses incredible sums. Madame La Bert has drawn him into this new vice—he liked it not, till he became her slave. I certainly was not totally unfortunate while he neither troubled me with his caresses, nor shocked me by reproach.

It is now far otherwise — he never sees me, but he assumes a countenance almost terrific—nor ever speaks but to distress my sensibility.

I begged leave, yesterday, to retire to Lausanne; but I was peremptorily refused — he desired me to like the
place

place which contained him; and if I did not know how, he would advise me to learn; for I should not go without him; and he did not intend to leave Paris for some time.

I will make no comments upon this speech — you are more at liberty on this occasion, and you can judge of what I felt, better than my pen can describe.

The Duke De Maurice follows me like my shadow — I treat him almost ill — I never speak to him, but when the strictest rules of politeness oblige me to it. Notwithstanding which, he is a constant attendant at my parties — he is an eternal spy upon my actions.

The other day I met him at the

Marchioness De Sauverre's, I had just returned from the Bois de Boulogne, where I attended the court on a hunting party, and was still in my riding dress when I called upon the Marchioness.

The Duke in a whisper congratulated me on the favour I enjoyed at Versailles, talked much in the praise of the king's judgment, and concluded by asking, whether I remembered the story of La Valiere?

My having admired the king's person, and acknowledged that I did, together with my attendance about the Comtesse De Artois, brought on me this sarcasm of the Duke's, to which you may suppose I made no reply,

reply, but by look expressive of my contempt.

I see the Comte De Solignac frequently—I fear not to unbosom myself to him—he counsels—he directs me in the paths I should tread, in order to shun the wiles of the Duke De Maurice, but, believe me, I say nothing of the treatment I receive from Laufanne.

Weak as my conduct might have appeared to you in my last scene with Luzy, I am cautious of mentioning his name to any one but you, and my respect towards my husband seems to encrease in the eye of every bystander. Solignac appears to imagine that I love the Marquis — Solignac

cannot really think so: but he is all delicacy.

As for Julia De Sancerre, she is with me constantly, and sees more of the Marquis's behaviour than I could wish should be exposed even to her. I often surprise her in tears, after any thing has happened that manifests either his folly or ill humour. She is a valuable friend, and I love her sincerely.

Adieu, my Maria!

L E T-

LETTER XI.

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE,

TO

MARIA DE VILLENEAUF.

I HAVE just received a summons to attend my dear mother who is very ill. The Marquis is not in Paris — he is with Madame La Bert in Flanders. — I shall go, however, though his anger should be the consequence. The carriages are getting ready to convey us to Clarence. Julia De Sancerre accompanies me. I will finish my letter when I arrive at my fathers.

G 4

AH,

* * * * *

Clarence.

AH, my God, Maria! — what will become of me! — my mother — my dear mother is dangerously ill! she hardly knows her Victoria. I have wept over, and kissed her lifeless hands.

She looked steadfastly at me for some minutes, but turned from me after, without emotion. I cannot proceed — I am too much affected — I will describe my arrival some other time.

As soon as I came in view of Clarence, my heart seemed to die within me — anxious as I had been for revisiting this scene of my happiest days, the miseries I had latterly experienced here, obliterated all remembrance

brance of former pleasures, and I beheld it as the monument of my infidelity to Luzy.

A fatal presension too, seized my soul. — The hope of rushing into my parents arms would have been some satisfaction: — but, alas! my mind foreboded that I should find my father only sensible of my approach. At this idea, my tears flowed in abundance, and I shed them in the bosom of Julia De Sancerre.

As I entered the gates, I perceived the domestics who waited at them mournful and pensive: they however, as I passed, hailed my arrival with some faint demonstrations of joy.

When I stepped out of the carriage,

all the servants blessed me with tears, and called me the comfort of their future days. As I stood amongst them, my father graciously came out to meet me; his step was solemn, — his countenance severe and melancholy. I threw myself at his feet, and clasped his knees. He raised me with some tenderness, and supported me to his study.—When we got there, I enquired immediately for my mother.

“ Sit down, girl,” cried my father, “ I will tell you presently.” Julia De Sanscerre and I seated ourselves; and my father, after wiping away some tears, thus proceeded:

“ You will find your mother in that trying situation which calls for fortitude

tude to support. — She is hastening to a better life.

“ Victoria,” added he with a stern voice, “ Victoria,” — and the sound died away upon his lips.—I arose to take his hand, — but he pointed once more to the seat, which I had quitted.

“ Stay,” cried he, “ I will speak presently.” — and my father leaned his face upon his arm to hide his grief. As soon as he had a little recovered, he went on.

“ Victoria, there is but one action of your mother’s life of which she repents—and that is — her having been accessory to your marrying a man you did not love” — here his voice faltered again—“ but you are happy!

are you not happy, child?"

My father anxiously waited for my reply.—Something arose in my bosom that prevented articulation — I could not speak. — I again quitted my seat, and threw myself on my knees before him.

"Are you not happy?" repeated my father. "Oh! yes, yes, sir," answered I, "happy, if my being so, can make my mother live—can make my father easy," and a violent gush of woe hindered my saying more. My father raised me to his arms.

"These tears, Victoria! — ah, why these tears? — your friend, too! — ah, Madam," cried he, taking the hand of Julia De Sanscerre, "explain why
these

these tears should be such ready comers, if her husband treats her as my fond wishes hope?"

Julia De Sanfcerre replied not but by a shrug of her shoulders, and an averted face. My father quitted his seat abruptly.

"By heaven," exclaimed he, "she is miserable!—and that by my cruelty!"—At these words he left the room in an agony of passion.

Some minutes after, my mother's woman came to tell me that she was awake, and had enquired if I was come. — This was sufficient — and I hastened to her chamber.

As soon as I entered, I perceived her sitting up in her bed, assisted by
pillows

pillows — her dear revered face — ah, my Maria, how altered!—it was pale and melancholy. Her head was supported by one hand, and her eyes fixed upon a picture of the blessed Virgin, which she held in the other. When I beheld her reverend form, I flew to the bed-side, and threw myself on my knees before her in a flood of anguish. My mother turned her eyes from the picture, and placed them on me: my tears fell upon the hand I had seized, and I called upon her by the name of mother — friend — and comforter.—My mother answered not —she did not know me!

My God, Maria! — can I describe to you my sensations in those moments!
—impos-

—impossible. My mother soon after sunk her head upon a pillow, and dropt asleep. My agitation obliged me to leave the apartment, lest my sobs should have disturbed her repose. It was in that interval I wrote the first few lines dated from hence.

When I laid down my pen, I went softly into my mother's room, and took my seat at the foot of her bed. She did not awake for an hour, nor could I be prevailed on to leave her. When she stirred, I advanced towards her, and asked her if she knew me? — she looked at me stedfastly.

“ Yes, yes ” — she cried, “ it is the well known form of my injured child ! if thou art really her,” added she, in

a feeble tone, "ah, forgive me for the only act of unkindness I ever forced on you! — If thou art but her shade — reproach me not with her wrongs for my Victoria's self would treat me with greater lenity. Ah, my God!" continued she clasping her hands together, "ah, my God! what a sacrifice did she make to duty — did duty exact from her? Victoria—Victoria!" she exclaimed, and again sunk on her pillow — I threw myself on the bed, and wept aloud.

"Ah, my mother! — you never injured me — you were always good to your Victoria — you have made her happy — and she comes to bless you for it. — Think no more of the sacrifice

fice you mentioned — it was only a momentary struggle — it is now over, and I regret it no further.”

My mother once more raised herself in her bed, she listened to me with the most cautious attention — her features brightened as I spoke, — a gentle glow overspread her dying face.

“Blessed virgin,” cried my mother with uplifted hands and eyes; “dear and spotless lady, — in your intercession I have confided — receive the warmest thanks my poor heart can give — to thy protection I commend my child — offer her to my crucified Lord — and beg of him to defend her from the perils of a worldly life. — Ah, had I before reflected on the mo-
dest

dest merit of Luzy ! — alas ! — poor Luzy !” and she rested her weary head upon my bosom. — Now, my friend, look on thy suffering Victoria, and pity her poignant sensibility.

My dear mother from that moment, my Maria, has been herself no longer: a fatal stupor, which bespeaks the approach of death, hath fastened on her, and she is at once regardless of husband, child, and friend. I have quitted her chamber for a few minutes to conquer the extreme force of my affliction, which seems to disturb my father’s silent and awful sorrow.

I must now, however, beg leave to return to her pillow, where I will endeavour to stifle my sobs, my heart-
ren-

rending sighs. — Ah, my mother —
my ever dear — my tender, sympathiz-
ing parent!

L E T T E R X I I .

JULIA DE SANSERRE

T O

MARIA DE VILLENEAUF.

[*In continuation.*]

TO you, my dear Villeneauf, I will
make no apologies for beginning
a correspondence with the saddest ti-
dings a pen can relate. — Suffice it to
say, I write of thy beautiful, thy suf-
fering Victoria; and to her misfor-
tunes

tunes thy ear and heart are ever open.

Her mother the Dutcheſs De Clarence lived but a few hours after the concluſion of the Marchioneſs's laſt paragraph. She however regained her ſenſes an hour before her death, and employed that time in receiving the laſt rites of the church — in taking leave of her huſband—and in the tenderſt adieus to her injured child. She embraced her Victoria with much affection — ſhe held before her, the pictures of the Comte De Luzy, and that of our immaculate Lady.

“ Here, my daughter,” cried ſhe,
 “ at the moment I offer you the portrait of a lover, I preſent you with that of chaſtity itſelf. Let your friend-
 ſhip

ship alone be given to the former — but let your whole heart be devoted to the latter. — These,” continued she, “are faint resemblances of what we love — of what we revere — but they serve to remind us — that Luzy was the most amiable of all lovers — that the Virgin Mary was the most pure of all women.”

She then prayed fervently for the happiness, for the preservation of her daughter's virtue; and throwing herself into her arms, leaned her head upon her bosom, and breathed her last sigh, without a groan — without a struggle.

It is now a difficult task to say more — to describe to you the warm — the sensible sorrow of a tender and dutiful child

child for the loss of a parent ever admirable as a wife—ever amiable as a mother. She was absorbed in affliction, yet she endeavoured to conquer it, in order to speak consolation to her wretched father — whose agonies no tongue—no pen can delineate.

I am sorry to be obliged to add that the Duke was that night seized with very alarming symptoms. — He grew worse for three days successively, and he now lies so ill as to be despaired of by his physicians. The Marchioness is at times almost frantic with despair — she kneels and bedews the corse of her fond mother with her tears — she invokes her to pray for the preservation of the only comfort she has left—then
with

with a face of affected composure, she returns to her place behind her father's pillow.

The Duke, insensible to every thing but the injury he has done his daughter, and the horror of death; loses, in asking her pardon, those moments in which, by an upright resignation to the will of heaven, he could assist her youth by offering her the supporting advice of a dying parent. He is, I fear, drawing near his end, and in that minute of distress, she will lose the only friend of whom her husband, the Marquis, stands in awe.

Laufanne will then prove more openly his fondness of libertinism — and his lovely wife will feel too severely,

verely, the sacrifice she made to filial duty in favour of the most abandoned of his sex.

The Marchioness has sent to desire my attendance in the Duke's apartment—my fears prophecy a thousand horrible incidents.

* * * * *

Twelve o'clock at night.

IT is all over with the Duke, my dear Maria—he died in the tender arms of his daughter, who soothed, in those dreadful moments, the pangs and terrors of the grim tyrant.—She is, at present, in a situation that beggars even eloquence. She will not
consent

consent to leave Clarence until the funeral is over. The Duke and Duchess are to be interred in the family vault on the same day.

I will make no apology for quitting this subject so abruptly. — I must fly to our dear Victoria, who stands in need of all my friendship — of all my consolation.

Yours ever, my dear Villeneauf,

JULIA DE SANSCERRE.

LETTER XIII.

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE,

TO

MARIA DE VILLENEAUF.

I AM but just recovered from a severe illness which has confined me six weeks. Death has been very busy about me for some time past — he has at length spared the only object that I could have wished him to have taken, and instead of her life, has robbed her of the comfort—of the sanction of beloved parents. My dear Maria!
— what

what pangs have I not endured since I wrote to thee last!

The cruel Marquis would not let me stay at Clarence till the funeral obsequies were performed. He came down to chide me for having, as he called it, *so silly an intention*, and desired me to prepare to go with him back to Paris.

You have frequently told me, my Maria, that we could oftner command our feelings, than we were willing to endeavour for. In the bitterness of that moment I thought of you.

Overwhelmed as I was with sorrow at the idea of parting for ever from the objects in the world, I held most dear, though cold and inanimate — to go

with a man whom I neither loved or respected; a man from whom I could expect no consolation for the heart-breaking calamity that had befallen me; nay, on the contrary, one whose insensibility, or whose adamant soul would either cause him to deride or insult my sorrow: — tormented, I say, as I was with these cruel ideas—I appeared to acquiesce with resignation to his will — and I consented without expostulation to accompany him whithersoever he pleased.

The Marquis seemed surprised at my condescension — he looked at the same time as if he was not contented with his having given me, to all appearance, so little dissatisfaction. He
bit

bit his lips — he seemed to pause for a few moments ; at length, pretending to recollect an engagement upon business for the next morning in Paris—he said, *he must absolutely set out that minute.*

It was now, my dear Maria, ten o'clock at night — I was really exhausted by grief and fatigue, and wholly unable to take such a journey. — I therefore besought him to let me rest that night — promising to follow him the ensuing day.

He flew into a most violent rage.—
*Cursed delicacy — cursed affectation —
 his life was embittered by my whimsies —
 by my caprice — he would set off that
 instant—and I might either follow him,*

or stay forever from him — just as best suited my inclination.

At these words I hid my face in the bosom of Julia De Sanscerre — and in spite of my resolution, I burst into an agony of tears.

The coach was at the door in a moment. — I arose — I was hastening to take one farewell embrace of my dear father and mother—to breathe out one ardent prayer for their repose, at the feet of their coffins; when the inhuman man laid hold of my arm, and exclaimed “do you intend, Madam, to accompany me or not?”

I assured him I would attend him after having taken an eternal adieu of my beloved parents.

“ By

“By the great God,” cried he, almost hoarse with passion, “you shall not stir — the carriage is ready — step into it, or I shall go without you — and if so — never will I behold you more.”

“My Lord,” replied I, “when I tell you that to take a last view of my tender mother — of my dear father — will be to me in some measure a consolation — surely your goodness will suffer me to indulge myself in it! — your humanity cannot refuse me such a trifling comfort!”

No,” returned he, — “you shall not overcome me thus by argument — the case is clearly this — if you choose to oblige me — give me your hand di-

rectly to convey you to the carriage—
if not—remain here for ever.”

The Marquis turned from me in a phrenzy—I paused—the affair, however, required no consideration—it was evident that to support the character of a good wife—to fulfil the vow of obedience I made at the altar—my will must ever be subservient to his caprices : —I therefore, with a sigh, entreated him to be calm, assured him of my being ready to go with him whenever he thought fit, and stepping to the door, ordered my woman to prepare to attend us immediately to town : this done, I went into the great hall, where the Marquis and Julia were assembled, and we waited there
some

some minutes before every thing was ready.

I will not omit to mention to you one circumstance that affected me much; it was an odd one—the remembrance of it makes me weep.

As we were detained there for Nannette and the little parcel with my night cloaths which she had orders to bring with her, my father's old favourite spaniel crawled towards me, and laying himself at my feet, gave a deep groan. — I stooped down to caress him—I called him by his name — he heard me not—that groan was his last.

“ Poor Zephyr !” cried the old butler, with tears falling from his eyes,

H 5

“ you

“ you and I have looked on happy days — they are all passed now — and you have died in good time !”

I could have given way to some bursts of grief — but I thought of your remark—and suppressing my sensibility, I hurried into the coach — where, under the darkness of the night, I succeeded in concealing the real poignancy of my sorrow.

Tell me, my Maria, if you do not think I have had some trials to contend with ?

After travelling about twenty miles, I found myself incapable of proceeding further — an universal faintness overspread my frame ; I sunk upon the shoulder of my friend Sancerre

scerre — the Marquis, I believe, was terrified: he ordered his servants to stop at the next village, where I lay the remainder of the night in an uneasy bed, and a room so cold, as to afford me but very little rest. I was awakened early in the morning to proceed on my journey, which I undertook with no pleasure — but with a visible encreasing indisposition.

When we arrived at Paris, I was taken extremely ill — and I am at present so weak and languid from all I have endured, as to be scarcely able to hold my pen.

Julia De Sancerre has never left me. The Comte De Solignac has often called to make the most friendly en-

quiries after my health. I have sent to beg his company in my dressing room this evening.

I will own to you, I desire to speak to him on a subject which I once firmly intended never to mention to him more : but my dear mother, in her dying moments, presented me with the portrait of the Comte De Luzy — I wish not to keep it — my mother knew not how dear his image was still to my bosom—she offered it to me as a remembrancer of an inestimable friend, whom she had ever prized as such—and to whom I owed some esteem. I have, however, consulted my religion—my reason upon it ; they both condemn my keeping
in

in possession the picture of a man, who must ever appear to me in the light of a dangerous insinuating lover.

My heart rebels against the severity of this determination — but my poor heart must conquer all its weaknesses — or break in the attempt. I listen not to it — I pay no regard to its soft complainings—I consider it as a treacherous friend—as a dangerous pleader—the image of Luzy is sufficiently impressed upon it—it need not desire more.

Ah, it is not an inanimate portrait that is there painted? — he breathes — he lives — he speaks himself!

I have seen Solignac — he received from me the picture with sighs and
reluc-

reluctance. He bade me keep it—for he believed it was all that remained of his friend.—I started—he seemed sorry for what had escaped him—he took it however—but would explain himself no farther. What could he mean, my Maria?—perhaps it was an artifice to induce me not to part with the charming portrait!

The Marquis has entirely forsaken Madame La Bert; who has, it seems, suffered so cruelly by his neglect, that forgetting all her other suitors, she has retired to a convent, where she proposes to end her days in sorrow and repentance.

Poor Madame La Bert! I will not at present intrude on her retirement,
left

lest she should impute it to a far different cause from that which must inspire me to visit her. Some weeks hence I will go to her convent — I will encourage her repentance — I will weep over her misfortune, and endeavour to console her for it.

Adieu, my Maria! — forget not that I am,

Your

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE.

L E T.

L E T T E R XIV.

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE,

T O

MARIA DE VILLENEAUF.

I TOLD you in my last of my intention to visit Madame La Bert; I went to her convent yesterday, and will give you the particulars of our conversation.

I did not send in my name, but desired one of the sisters to say, “a friend of hers would be glad to speak with her.” In a few minutes Madame La Bert appeared—she is, at present, only
a pen-

a pensioner in the house— I therefore saw her without restraint. As soon as she entered, I could perceive that the sight of me affected her highly : — she blushed—she trembled—she hesitated. I appeared not to observe her confusion —but advanced towards her, and saluted her with much freedom and friendship.

The poor woman recovered herself, in some degree, from the unaffected ease of my deportment : — she wiped the tears from her eyes — and paid me in return some polite and agreeable compliments. She condoled with me upon the sable dress I wore, and heaved many sighs on seeing me affected at the sad occasion of my assuming it.

“ Ah,

“ Ah, Madam,” she at length exclaimed, “ happy had it been for me had my parents lived to inspect and watch over my education!—their child would not now be the prey of cruel remorse—the only object in the world, who could injure amiableness like yours !

“ That I have injured you—is too true—that I do repent sincerely of it —is also a truth. I do not merit the honour of a visit from you. You may be a stranger to my guilt —but I can never consent to abuse you further by suffering you to remain in an error so fatal to my peace — so prejudicial to your honour.

“ You must not repeat this favour,
Madam ;”

Madam ;” continued she in a flood of tears, “ my character is no longer an innocent one—the world will talk, should you renew your intimacy with me — and the chastity of your fame would be blackened by your friendship for me.

“ Ah, my God !” continued Madame La Bert, “ what punishment do I not deserve ! — yet I will not merit more, by pretending innocence, and suffering you, most beautiful, most excellent lady, to continue your esteem for me.

“ Enter not these walls again, until I prove myself a penitent magdalen indeed—until I can invite you to behold me about to resign the world, and all its allurements — until, worn
by

by fasting, prayer, and hardship, I shall in some measure have expiated the enormity of those crimes for which I deserve to suffer."

At these words, Madame La Bert covered her face with her hand, and the tears trickled in large drops through her fair and slender fingers. As for my part I wept with her — I endeavoured to comfort her — I bade her not to despond; to consider that God was very merciful, and never rejected the sigh of a penitent—the tears of a contrite heart.

I bewailed with her the unhappy credulity of our sex — I inveighed against the too cruel arts of the other, which were ever practised with impunity

nity against our weakness. I assured her she should always command my friendship — that I never offered it to her before — because she stood in no need of consolation till now—but as it was *now* required—I hoped I was incapable of withholding it from her.

Madame La Bert viewed me with eyes of astonishment — she could not express her feelings — she seized my hand—she carried it with wildness to her lips.

“ Ah,” she exclaimed, “ the cruel—the barbarous Marquis!—he has robbed me not only of virtue — but of peace for ever !”

“ My dear Madam,” cried I, “ are they not synonymous terms ? be persuaded

suaded there is but one way of regaining the latter — and that can only be, by living up to those sentiments of piety and religion, which heaven has now been pleased to inspire your heart with.”

I will not repeat the effusions of her gratitude, in return for a mere nothing, a mere charitable visit, which gave me more pleasure than it could have conferred on her, since it afforded me an opportunity of beholding the most edifying example in the world; and of being convinced that the heart of this unfortunate woman was sincerely touched with a just sense of her dangerous way of life.

People, I believe, thought her more
aban-

abandoned than she really was; she had great vivacity — was a free talker — and had a degree of coquetry in her disposition which rendered her the object of every man's attention. She is very pretty too; — a circumstance I never before observed until I beheld her in the amiable light she appeared yesterday.

I will own to you her former carriage was too assured — too indelicate to allow me to see her with unprejudiced eyes—she was, however, always talked of as a great beauty.

You will perhaps suppose that the Marquis having got rid of this engagement is more at home; and is become domestic:—but there you will
sadly

badly mistake: he now pays his devoirs to the celebrated Le Blanc, who is the handsomest—the most extravagant—and the most elegant Courtesan in all Paris.

Yesterday, as I was returning from the convent which immures the unhappy La Bert, my carriage was driven violently against by another—and in such a manner as to prevent either from proceeding.

I was terrified, and looked out—when I perceived the Marquis and this unfortunate creature in the chariot, which impeded my way: at that moment I heard a general cry in the street, *that it was the Marchioness De Lausanne, who was in the most imminent danger;*

danger ; and the Duke De Henrie, with many other young noblemen, who were standing at the door of an hotel which I passed, ran round and persuaded me to alight until the carriages should be disengaged.

I immediately gave my hand to the Duke, and was by him conducted into the house of a Bourgeoise, where the gentlemen clustered about me, to veil from my sight the disagreeable view of my husband leading forth Mademoiselle. I confess it gave me some pleasure to observe, upon re-entering my carriage, hers lying entirely neglected by every one but her own attendants ; whilst all seemed

anxious to place mine in its former security.

A wheel which had been torn off from hers, still lay upon the ground — mine, that had suffered in the same manner, was entirely set to rights, and that almost instantaneously.

I affected not to know whose chariot it was, nor who were in it; I therefore begged the Duke, if he was acquainted with the persons to whom the carelessness of my coachman had caused such an injury, to assure them I was sorry for it, and hoped they would accept of my compliments.

He smiled, and bowing upon my hand, *entreated me to believe, he would*
act

act on the occasion like one who considered my politeness as his own.

I ordered my people to distribute money amongst the obliging croud, and returned home through loud acclamations of applause. The worst — or, if you will, the best of it was, that I saw Mademoiselle Le Blanc in a house just opposite to where my carriage stood when I entered it—so that she and her Suivante had the mortification to behold me an object of concern to the multitude, whilst they both experienced their contempt and neglect.

So certain it is, that the appearance of a woman of virtue, will always command respect and assistance in dis-

tress, before one famous for nothing but beauty and profligacy, even from those who are libertines in their general conduct.

I met the Marquis at night at a supper given by the Comtesse De Grignon. — He could hardly restrain the impetuosity of his fury at my approach — I beheld it in his eyes ; and left Madame De Grignon's as soon as I could retire with any tolerable decency. He is, however, determined to mortify me for the accident, tho' I am sure no body could be more blameless on the occasion.

He told me this morning that he intends to sell his seat at Clarence, which my father left him. I answered

swered that I had no right to say a word against it, if it was his will to do so. However, I think it is too charming a place for him to give up easily, and I make no doubt he will be proud to keep it, in spite of his vain boast. Poor man! he has more of my pity than aversion.

I have not seen the Duke De Maurice since my return to town.—He has lately lost his mother, which it is believed sincerely grieves him. I am sorry for the circumstance, but happy that his absence from Paris frees me from the trouble of listening to a subject in which he appears so obstinately interested.

He is thought to be a dangerous
I 3 man

man—but how can a heart like mine, be sensible of those charms, which is steeled by duty, and has already loved one so much superior to him in all that can engage the tenderness of woman?

Julia de Sanscerre is gone to her Villa near Paris.—Ah, that Villa!—what a scene!—but I will stay my impetuous pen.—Dear Maria, need I repeat that, whilst I have life, I must be devoted to you?

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE.

L E T-

LETTER XV.

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE,

TO

MARIA DE VILLENEAUF.

THE Duke De Maurice is returned to Paris, and the strong marks of grief which were said to be expressed on his countenance, and in his behaviour, have fled like clouds before the appearance of the sun.

He is gay, assured, and gallant—he speaks of love, like one certain of success — and paints to me his passion in every look and word:— to be short,

— he is troublesome and highly disagreeable.

I was yesterday in waiting on the Comtesse D'Artois at court, when the Comte D'Artois, and the Duke De Maurice made their appearance. I was in conversation with some of the ladies. — The Comte and the Duke, who had shewn themselves in the circle, retired from it, and joined us.

“ You are too charming this morning, Madame De Laufanne !” cried the Comte, with a polite air, and a tender look ; “ you outshine in beauty,” added he in a whisper, “ every other woman, the Queen not excepted.” — I curtsied. — “ By my faith,” continued he, “ Madame D'Artois does not act prudently

prudently in keeping so near her person the loveliest woman in France :—she must be vain to suppose, that she will claim adoration on those days that you are in waiting.”

The Comte played with my fan—and in taking it from my hand, he contrived to press my fingers.—I said little, — I received his flattery with a polite indifference — he perceived it—and leaning on the Duke’s arm, said, in a voice just loud enough for me to hear, “this Madame De Lausanne is, I find, one of those cruel beauties who can behold the agonies they cause, without feeling even compassion. — There is a something in her eyes, which awes me into silence. — Tell

her, however, my dear Maurice, that a Prince loves her, who will only value that title, as he can confer glory and power on her.

The Comte, after this speech, retired to some distance, and the Duke approached me. — He smiled in my face.

“Madam, you have heard the commission I am charged with from the Comte?”

“Yes, my Lord,” cried I, “I have. The Comte is excusable in giving you such a one, to a woman whose principles he knows nothing of:—you, however, have not the like apology in the acceptance of it to make;—but if you are to learn it now, be assured yourself,

self, and tell the Prince, that I am not the creature you and he take me for : that I owe too much love and duty to my husband ever to receive with pleasure such declarations from any other man." I said this with an air of anger and reserve, and walking from him placed myself too near Madame D'Artois to suffer such impertinence again during my stay in the drawing room.

The Comte D'Artois is very handsome — is very witty — and could my heart be endangered by the conversation of any other man but Luzy, the Comte D'Artois would be the most likely person to set me on my guard — but he is as much inferior to Luzy, as he is superior to every other. — Do

you not despise the Duke De Maurice?

The Marquis, I perceive, is ruining himself with play, and his extravagant generosity to Mademoiselle Le Blanc. — 'It is at her house he games so highly—and if I am not misinformed he is always a considerable loser. His estate of Belfont has been sold to defray a debt of honour to the Chevalier D'Elbeu, who is a man notorious for living by the ruin of others.

The Marquis looked a little serious upon it for an hour or two—but a note from his Sultana soon dispelled every cloud, and he hastened to receive consolation from her—or rather—to be induced to sell a few more of his estates, in order that she and her
fol-

followers should gain by his folly.

She has, I am told, a new equipage for almost every week in the year; that her cloaths are sumptuous, and that her jewels are as fine as mine. She lives in a style hardly to be equalled—and her house is the resort of all the libertine youth of fashion.

The Marquis De Lausanne is, however, above suspicion—he cannot suppose it possible, that a woman whom he has once addressed, should ever prove herself unworthy of that honour — it never enters the poor Marquis's head, that, amongst the profusion of his gifts, there may be a certain void in the heart of a courtesan which he never, with all his merit, can supply.

He

He does not dream that this void must be filled by variety—by the most assiduous and slavish attention — by new conquests — and, in fine, by the indulgence of every caprice.

Had the Marquis less money—was he not reputed and known to be one of the richest noblemen in France — Mademoiselle Le Blanc would since have deserted him for a superior fortune; but as that is not easy to be found, she contents herself in paying homage to him, until the poor man shall have paid too dear a debt to her charms and avarice — until he really ruins himself for ever in fortune and in health.

I often visit Madame La Bert, who
really

really appears a sincere penitent. She wept the other day in speaking of the Marquis, and swelled with indignation when she informed me, that he had quitted her for Mademoiselle Le Blanc.

I will own to you I wondered how she could mention him — and still more how her delicacy could start such a subject to me, — her anger to, when she mentioned Mademoiselle Le Blanc! — but thank heaven, I was not censorious in my conjectures! and had reason soon after to believe by her behaviour that *that* resentment was only the last struggle of an expiring flame which she was gaining virtue sufficient to abhor.

Julia

Julia De Sancerre is really a true and affectionate friend — she seldom leaves me but on occasions which demand her presence at home — she rallies the Marquis charmingly — and very often makes him look sillier than is absolutely natural to him : — he, however, takes her pleasantry with good humour, though he dares not return it.

Julia asked him, the other day, in her lively manner, whether he did not think his wife the most beautiful woman in the universe ? — he smiled — she ran and took my hand, and led me to him. — “ Here is a shape ! — an air ! — a face ! — a hand and arm ! — heaven and earth, man ! —
do

do but view her with attention."

The Marquis, who was sitting down, looked up at me, and smiled again.

"Come, come," cried Julia with impatience, "answer me!"

The Marquis pulled me on his knee.

"Why, Madam," replied he, "you shall have my opinion. — My wife is certainly the most perfect both in form and face of any woman I ever saw; — but I cannot be contented with that alone. — She is witty too, I believe — very well. — This I take upon trust — for I never saw her cheerful. — She is warm, sensible and loving — at least I have heard, that she once loved with
ardour

ardour. — All that is very well too. — Her husband never experiences from her these proofs of sensibility. — Thus, Madam,” added he, “ I may be said to have the most charming woman in the world in my possession — when in truth — I find her only a very beautiful statue. — Such a behaviour I cannot brook — in short, if she loved me — she would act differently — and perhaps if I was not her husband — I should like her better.”

This, my dear Maria, was a very heavy charge against me — notwithstanding I defended myself very tolerably — I protested that he could be no judge of my affection for him, for that he never gave me the pleasure of his company.

pany at home, but in a large circle.— I turned his weapons at last so effectually upon himself, that he was brought to acknowledge he might have made a better husband.

In fine, I invited him to sup with me the next night, and promised him amusement. — We parted very good friends that evening ; but I perceived he attended his usual appointment with Le Blanc, after all this conversation.

The next night came—I dressed with an easy elegance which really became my features, and which I had succeeded in that day better than ever : my company was formed of the most agreeable women of fashion, and of men,
not

not inferior to them in wit and brilliancy. After the dishes were removed, an extreme fine band of music which I had ordered to be prepared in the next room struck up, and after they had played some time, every lady gave an Italian air, accompanied by a Piano forte and a German flute — then a French one — then an English one, out of the opera of Artaxerxes.

Their voices were all fine—their accompaniments admirable! — wit — mirth—and the most delicate pleasure seemed to possess every heart, but that of the Marquis, who endeavoured, through politeness, to conceal his restlessness—but I could plainly perceive that his situation was uneasy
to

to him, and that decency prevented his leaving it.

I do assure you, my dear Maria, I studied to give him delight—to charm—to inspire him with love : — I even forgot Luzy for the night—or at least I strove to banish his idea from my bosom.—I considered, that if, through any coldness or neglect in my behaviour towards him, my husband gave himself up to libertinism—I must stand condemned before the tribunal of God and man.

The thought shocked me — and I called forth all my graces — made use of every insinuation, every becoming artifice to make him suppose himself beloved, and to draw him most powerfully

erfully to me alone. I consented to sing at his request — I exerted my voice, and filled the room with the softest sounds I was mistress of. Solognac took up the flute——he accompanied me in a touching and masterly manner. I sang of love—I expressed it not only by my lips—I fixed my eyes on Lausanne—I made them speak more tenderly.

The Marquis was struck—he viewed me with an air of exultation and astonishment—he returned every thing I had suffered myself to say, in a language no less strong no less intelligent. It grew late — the company was dispersing — a billet was given to the Marquis — he retired to read it—
his

his carriage was ordered — I saw no more of him that night.

The next day he wrote me a gallant letter—he thanked me for the delightful evening he had passed—was sorry he could not come to make his adieus in person—prayed me to accept them then — for he was just setting out on a little tour to Flanders, from whence he should not return for some time.

Shall I tell you that I was sorry—?oh, no!—my heart will not allow me to write a falsehood—but this I will assure you that I lamented his infatuation — that I pitied the depravity of his morals.— After that I need not add—Le Blanc was of his party.

Some weeks have elapsed since I laid
down

down my pen.—The Marquis returned a few days ago. He has since endeavoured to be polite — nay, sometimes exerted himself to appear tender — my manner was uniformly so to him — but Le Blanc — in fine, Le Blanc is his mistress — I unfortunately less charming, because I am his wife.

We are to have an elegant ball in Paris this evening given by the officers of B****k's regiment — the Duke De F***** always elegant, will, I suppose, outshine on this occasion.—He is very handsome — and as witty as he is charming.

Julia De Sancerre says he shall be her cecisbeo for the evening — he is a gallant man—well received by the ladies

dies

dies, and is a general favourite amongst them. I shall go to oblige Julia, but am determined neither to dance or to stay there long.

Farewel, my Maria — continue to love,

Your,

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE.

L E T T E R X V I.

VICTORIA DE LAUSANNE,

T O

MARIA DE VILLENEAUF.

I REJOICE to hear that your amiable mother is able to be removed to Belvoir — her estate of that name is a little Paradise—and the air will, I trust, prove salutary to her. You say she mentions me with affection, and desires me to hope for a better change when it shall please heaven to appoint.

Tell my dear and revered Monitress that I endeavour to assume courage, and
to

to gain by dissipation a thoughtlessness of mind which alone can preserve me from despair. — Remembrance will, however, obtrude its busy self even in those hours of noise and folly, and embitter every scene.

Tell her, however, I am not wanting in my efforts to conquer it — religion instructs me to do so — how I succeed heaven, who witnesses my bitter tears, can tell. — I will turn to another subject, my dear Maria. — I left you in my last to prepare for a ball.

I called upon Julia De Sanscerre at the appointed hour, and we went thither together. The Comte D'Artois's carriage had just driven off be-

fore mine drew up—he did us the honour of staying to hand us from it—he whispered as he led me in—that he intended to attach himself to me for the night. “I shall,” continued he, “be at your elbow constantly—Do you intend to dance?”

I answered him in the negative—he entreated—I pleaded indisposition—he declared then, that he would not be prevailed on to partake of that amusement, and he kept his word.

The Duke De F**** met us at the door of the ball room—he was elegantly dressed—and with many of the other officers conducted us to seats.

The assembly was very brilliant—
but

but was too public — the Duke De Maurice was there masked — he followed me about as a spy—he listened to every thing the Comte De Artois said to me—and in fact he heard several tender things on his part.

I behaved with my usual reserve, and with as much indifference as I really felt. The Comte had taken my fan from my hand—but by some accident it fell from his, and the outward stick was a little damaged. — He put it in his bosom, and vowed I should never have it more. I was taking some refreshments which the Duke De F**** had presented me with, — I pulled off my glove, and believe me,

it was stolen immediately by I know not whom.

My spy (the Duke) was very near me at that time—so were the Comte D'Artois, the Duke De F**** and the Chevalier De Mondonoir. — The theft was amongst them—they all denied it—but I perceived a smile from the Comte D'Artois's countenance, which made me suspect him. — In short, during my stay at the ball, he was never one moment from my side — and my stay was longer than I had intended it should be.

There were a number of masks — amongst them was one who entertained the company highly. — Some suspected it to be the Marquis
De

De Palmene — others Monsieur De Louvoi—but I perceived — or at least thought I perceived, too much of a female voice to believe it to be either.

I remarked it to the Comte D'Artois — he was struck with the conceit, for the mask wore the habit of a friar — and was really witty, satirical and polite.

The Marquis De Lausanne came in with a lady masked — he wore none himself, but appeared in the most becoming dress and style I had ever observed him to assume. The friar, on seeing him with the lady,—approached them with a grave and priestly air.

“ Child,” said he to Mademoiselle Le Blanc, “ I am concerned to see

thee so free with the Marquis De Lausanne for two reasons."

"What are they, father?" cried Le Blanc. "First," replied the friar, "because to be arm in arm with him implies a scandal to your character—for no woman of virtue was ever seen so familiar with him—not even his wife."

Here I blushed—the Comte D'Artois pressed my hand.

"Secondly, because if you really are not lost to sentiment—and should happen to entertain an unfeigned tenderness for him—he will soon give you reason to repent your fondness by dismissing you with ignominy—and forgetting your ever having conferred a
favour

favour on him.—Such is the character of him, whom you seem to regard as your lover.”

The Marquis looked offended. —
 “ And who are you,” exclaimed he in a rage, “ that dares, under the veil of ——— ”

“ Hold, hold !” replied the friar,
 “ all is fair under a mask ; — if you think not—be silent now—but avenge these *wrongs* another time ; however, you had better not be angry at all, for I have some advice to give you in your turn.”

“ I want none of it,” cried the Marquis.

“ Ah, my Lord,” said the good
 K 5 father,

father, “where is your politeness?—hear me out at least.”

The Marquis sullenly complied.

“Now,” resumed the friar, “here is a lady whom I have often seen with thee my son—I have sometimes met her with thee in a blazing chariot—at other times I have beheld her reclined on your shoulder, or supported by your arm—now, my son, the world says you have married the handsomest woman in France:—the world is censorious—though for my part, to judge the best—I suppose this lady to be your wife—and that poor neglected creature, who beholds you with anxiety and tenderness—whom every
one

one talks so highly of—whom I have never seen with you, is a mistress.”

Here the room resounded with applause—but as I pitied the Marquis—and really felt a good deal for my own situation—I gave my hand to Solignac, who conveyed me to my carriage unperceived by the rest, who were so much engrossed by the friar as not to be sensible for some moments of my departure.

Julia De Sanscerre, however, who stayed until the dawn of day, listening to the gallant compliments of her handsome partner, concluded for me the conversation of the friar. The Marquis whispered him, *that he expected to see him the next day in another ha-*

bit—a habit which would entitle him to treat him as he deserved.

“ This sanctified dress, sir,” continued he, “ though but assumed in jest — has something in it which checks my rage.—To-morrow I will ask for vengeance.”

“ You shall have it, child,” replied the friar, “ you shall strip from this head its reverend tonsure — you shall buffet one cheek, and I will turn the other — yet—if the man should at length overcome in me that spiritual sense of meekness which I hope ever to preserve — if, however, I should, from the frailty of human nature, be tempted to return your resentment — my first blows will be dealt — not
for

for myself—they shall bear with them, the injuries of Madame De Laufanne—my second shall be given for the unfortunate — unpitied — forgotten La Bert—and the third shall remind you, that a reptile when trod on can turn in hopes of vengeance.”

The Marquis went from him in indignation — and the Comte d’Artois followed the priest.

“ You are but a young piece of divinity I believe,” said the Comte to him, as he got him into a corner of the room, deserted by all but Julia De Sanscerre and Solignac : “ you are, however, father, the most agreeable of your order I ever conversed with.”

“ Ah, son,” replied the friar, —

“ People

“ People see at court very differently from those in the world : — were you to behold me in my convent, you would turn off—and leave sober lessons for a less fashionable hearer—but at a masquerade, I find a friar can be more attended to, than a blooming girl of Patmos—and that by a prince, who is well known to be a man of gallantry.”

Here the Comte laughed out.

“ Father,” said he, “ suffer me to crave your blessing, and prayers for the reformation of Versailles — but first allow me to kiss that holy hand.”

The wary priest would not consent to this salutation, which was only meant to try by the softness and delicate form of the hand, whether it

was

was a man or woman who personated the character.

The refusal, however, convinced the Comte of its being a female, and he told her in a low voice of his conjecture — and if she did not shew him her face in private there — he would take an opportunity of making her unmask somewhere else.

This seemed to alarm the fictitious friar, who disappeared very soon after, in spite of the Comte D'Artois's vigilance.—So much for the ecclesiastic—whom every body speaks of—but no one is certain who, or what he is.

The next morning I received, from the Comte D'Artois, a very polite billet, to enquire after my health, and

at

at the same time the most beautiful fan I ever saw, which he begged my acceptance of in exchange for the one he had taken from me the night before: There is a motto of diamonds on the sticks in these few expressive words, "*Je vous aime.*" The present is very magnificent, and worthy of the donor.

The Marquis De Lausanne looked displeased, as I shewed him the fan and the billet; he asked what they were to him? and throwing them on my toilette, he quitted the room. Poor man! — I could not help the friar's speaking plain truth!

It is now, my dear Maria, six months since the Comte De Luzy embarked

barked for Martinico—and no tidings have reached Comte Solignac of his arrival. — I do not suffer myself to think the worst — oh, no! — I will suppose him idle — indifferent — conquered perhaps by the beauties of some young — ah, my God! — I will even imagine *that*, in preference to his being lost for ever! Adieu my dear Maria.

L E T.

LETTER XVII.

The Marquis DE LAUSANNE,

TO

Monsieur DE MONTVILLE.

I HAVE lost a considerable sum
once more, dear Montville, to
the Chevalier D'Elbeu. All my ready
money is exhausted, and my estate at
Belfont has been sold to pay a former
honourable demand.—Poor Le Blanc
is inconsolable — for the losses have
happened at her house. I will not
leave her, lest she should suspect my
being obliged to part with another
estate,

estate, which would shock her tenderness. I therefore offer you the the seat of Clarence, which you wish to possess, on those terms I formerly mentioned to you, and to which you agreed.

It will affect Madame De Lausanne, perhaps, to part with a place to which she has been attached from her infancy—but I cannot think of selling either of the estates which my father left me—until I cannot help myself—they are valuable to me, more from their being admired by my charming mistress, than for any other reason—and I cannot think of distressing her to indulge a caprice of my wife's.

Adieu, dear Montville—I am at
present

present a little low spirited — a better run of luck to night will, however, set all to rights again — and one look — one smile from Le Blanc, will make me forget every disagreeable sensation. — I write from her chateau ten miles from Paris — If you wish to speak to me on the subject of Clarence, my carriage shall attend you hither — for I cannot think of going to town for some days at least.

Yours ever,

DE LAUSANNE.

LET-

LETTER XVIII.

Monsieur DE MONTVILLE,

TO

The Marquis DE LAUSANNE.

THE sum that you want, you may command of me, dear Marquis, without giving up the noble seat of Clarence. Had I known that Madame De Lausanne was tenderly attached to it, I should never have spoken to you on the subject of selling it. Do me the favour to make me your banker on this occasion — you have unlimited credit.

You

You cannot doubt my friendship for you—suffer me, therefore, dear Laufanne, to caution you against the arts of Le Blanc. She knows perhaps that D'Elbue will always win — and that your generous temper will never suspect how he should do so—I however, who am not blinded by infatuation, can easily see into her sorrow — and can doubt the Chevalier's honour.

Madame De Laufanne—ah, my God, Marquis, what a woman, to be exposed to a pang when a little prudence, and an exertion of common sense on your part, could save her from ever feeling one !

Farewel, do not be offended — if I did not love you, Le Blanc and D'Elbeu

beu might ruin you without my offering to interfere — and I might possess Clarence.

I am, much yours,

HENRY DE MONTVILLE.

LETTER XIX.

The Marquis DE LAUSANNE,

TO

Monsieur DE MONTVILLE.

YOUR friendship is too apprehensive, sir, — your offer too generous!

If

If you chuse to have Clarence,
let me have your answer — if not —
I cannot want for it a purchaser.

I am, fir,

Your obedient,

Humble Servant,

DE LAUSANNE.

LET-

LETTER XX.

Monfieur DE MONTVILLE.

TO

The Marquis DE LAUSANNE,

NO, my dear Marquis, I cannot consent to possess Clarence at the expence of Madame De Laufanne's tears.—I am a coward where a virtuous woman's sighs are weapons against me—but I can be brave where those of a courtezan are practiced to deceive.

Adieu ! I wish you would accept of my first offer.

Yours ever,

MONTVILLE.

LETTER XXI.

VICOTRIA DE LAUSANNE,

TO

MARIA DE VILLENEAUF.

MY dear friend, I am very miserable.—My amiable Maria, who can console me!—the Marquis is, I fear, almost ruined—his estate of Clarence is sold — Monsieur De Montville I heard was to be the purchaser—but he has, I am told declined it, and the Marquis offered it in my presence to the Comte De Sablau. — Solignac, who was by, hardly gave the Comte time to answer, before he declared himself ready to pay down the money for it. Lausanne closed with
the

the proposal, and Solignac this day compleated the purchase.

It is some comfort to me that my friend Solignac is in possession of it — since Clarence is no longer mine — I am glad it is his. — What a folly, my Maria! — but alas! I grieve in spite of my reason.

Ah, Luzy! — every grove — every tree — every flowering shrub there, was endeared to me, by your having wandered through all their sweets — they all can witness to thy vows of love and fidelity. — It was the place too of my birth — of the birth of my dear father — the favourite residence of my tender mother — the place which was consecrated to friendship by my Maria and her Victoria.

Do

Do you remember the little rustic temple at the bottom of the avenue of poplars ? — and that also embosomed in the orange grove ?—how often have we listened in them to the warblings of the thrush — the complaints of the nightingale — and to the still sweeter voices of Lindor and Luzy ! — Alas, poor Clarence !—“cruel remembrance — how shall I appease thee !” — I cannot write—I am unfit for any thing.—The Marquis too looks ill — he frets —ah, why does he not act consistently with reason ! — he has quarrelled it seems with his friend Monsieur De Montville — that grieves him, I believe.

Julia De Sanscerre says, De Montville

ville complained to her of his neglect — he talks with affection of him — and assures her the man is in himself naturally good — but spoiled by the imprudence of his late parents indulgence — and by some fatal prejudices which he has imbibed. I honour this Monsieur De Montville — his character is inexceptionably good — I am sorry any indifference has happened between them, for I was somewhat easy as long as Lausanne consulted his friendship.—The poor Marquis!—although he treats me unkindly, I am sorry for him.

Julia De Sancferre has just been with me — she entreats me to go with her to a masked ball, which is to be

given this night in Paris. She remarks that it will appear to Laufanne as if I was not displeased or concerned at his disposal of Clarence — she reasons me into the propriety of being seen there by him. She says such constant resignation to his will, must at length open his eyes, and incline him to adopt a different mode of behaviour. — I comply with a heavy heart.

Ah, how dreadful is it to assume an appearance so foreign to the real feelings of it! — I will not seal this until my return — but will endeavour to amuse you by a relation of what passes there.

Julia De Sanscerre chose the habit
of

of a *Payfanne* — I assumed the neat and simple one of a shepherdess — I preferred it for two reasons — the first was, because of its being a character that did not require much wit or vivacity — the second for its being easily put on without an exertion of taste, magnificence, or study.

Solignac, who engaged Julia De Sanscerre's hand for the night, equipped himself as a gardener—and carried with him his implements, and a basket of natural and artificial flowers. Our party was large, and we went in about eight o'clock.

I was accosted on my entrance by a mask who wore a plain white domino — he told me my name, and in a voice

voice I thought I knew.—I passed by him without returning him an answer. — As soon as I was seated a devil approached and took me by the hand.

“Come, fair Arcadian,” said he, “you and I must dance a minuet.”

“Excuse me,” cried I, “I have been warned against temptation—and your very appearance forbids me to go with you.”

“Ah!” replied he, “I am become harmless—I forsook the lower regions to night in order to steal a glance at innocence—and behold—I am fallen in love with it.”

Saying this, he again tendered me his hand, which I accepted, after whispering him “that to the Comte
D’Artois

D'Artois I would e'en venture to entrust myself." He answered only by a pressure of my fingers. We began—never did I see such grace but in the form of Luzy.—“Ah! thought I—I am not mistaken—this is indeed the Comte D'Artois.”

After we had finished, the applauses of the assembly made me blush though I was under a mask—and the graceful devil kneeled and kissed my hand in presence of them all.

“Where did you steal those charming steps—that air of elegance, pretty maid?” cried an old fat monk as I passed.

“Not from your convent father,” replied the devil.

“No—

“No—nor from hell, neither,” returned the offended priest.

“From heaven only could they be,” exclaimed the white domino who had accosted me before; “from heaven only,” and he kissed the hem of my garment.

The pretty air of this gallantry struck me, and taking a flower from my nosegay, and presenting it to him—I thanked him for his compliment.—He pressed the flower to his lips, and hid it in his bosom.

“I am jealous,” said the devil to me in a low voice.

“Oh, fie!” answered I, “when you left hell, you should have forsworn all unamiableness.”

“Ah,”

“ Ah,” returned he, “ but at the same time I should have made a vow not to have fallen in love with every virtue—and alas! since I have seen you, there is no room in my heart for any thing else, excepting fear and jealousy, which are the inseparable hand maids of that passion with which you have inspired me.”

I was about to answer when a nun pulled me by the sleeve.

“ Rash girl,” exclaimed she,—
 “ whence comes thy boldness? —
 who could conceive that, young and innocent as you appear, you should be attracted by vice—and that in its own rude shape! — The devil to conquer generally assumes the form of Maurice—
 rice—

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rice—but, Maurice, to captivate, need only, I find, appear as the devil.”

“ Ah, gentle sister!” cried I — and I took her arm, “ is this the Duke De Maurice?”

“ It is—it is,” answered she, “ none but the Duke De Maurice could so well personate the character he has assumed.”

The devil laughed.

“ Ha, my pretty vestal!” cried he, seizing her hand, “ you seem to know the Duke De Maurice better than the duties which that habit should impose on you,—You can tell, I find, how dangerous he is—though the virtues of charity and silence should rebel against so public a declaration.”

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



